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WELCOME

The core principles of the Mediterranean diet are based on dietary habits that date back thousands of years. As such, it's one of the most researched diets and scientifically proven to improve health and promote sustainable weight loss. Discover what this popular eating plan involves and all its benefits in the pages that follow. We explore foods you should be eating regularly, foods you should eat in moderation, and foods you should try to avoid. Plus there are 39 delicious recipes to try out at home. From simple snacks and light bites to hearty meals and sweet treats, embrace the Mediterranean lifestyle for a longer, healthier future.



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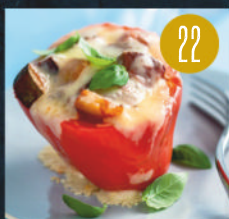
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ORANGES WERE FIRST INTRODUCED TO
PORTUGAL AND SPAIN BY MUSLIM TRADERS
DURING THE MIDDLE AGES

THE ORIGINS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

AN AUSPICIOUS COMBINATION OF LOCATION, CLIMATE AND HISTORY
PROVED TO BE THE RECIPE FOR ONE OF THE WORLD'S HEALTHIEST DIETS

The Mediterranean 'diet' as we know it today has only really been marketed as a specific eating plan over the last few decades, but its core principles are based on dietary habits that date back many thousands of years. The Mediterranean is a unique environment that has nurtured some of the world's most influential civilisations, such as the ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans. The cuisines that developed across this region are diverse, but they have all been shaped by their shared geography, climate, staple crops, and millennia of trade and cultural exchange. Broadly speaking, these

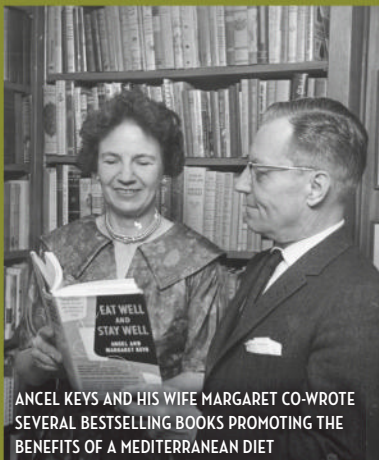
countries' traditional cuisines are mostly plant-based, with plenty of fresh fruit, vegetables, legumes and cereals, with occasional fish, seafood and dairy, but limited amounts of meat and sweet treats.

Most of the region enjoys a Mediterranean climate, characterized by hot, dry summers and mild, wet winters. There are three key crops that thrive in these conditions: olives, grapes and wheat. Together these are known as the 'Mediterranean triad', and they feature heavily in most of the region's cuisines in the form of olive oil, wine and bread. Ancient civilisations developed

agricultural methods to help cultivate their staple crops, such as tiered terraces, to protect against soil erosion on the Mediterranean's many hillsides and mountainsides, and irrigation systems to supply water to the more arid areas. In addition, technological advancements led to inventions like grain mills and olive presses. These made production of otherwise labour-intensive commodities like flour and olive oil far more efficient, and enabled them to be produced in greater quantities.

Mediterranean cuisine has been heavily influenced by occupying powers and

THE SEVEN COUNTRIES STUDY



ANCEL KEYS AND HIS WIFE MARGARET CO-WROTE SEVERAL BESTSELLING BOOKS PROMOTING THE BENEFITS OF A MEDITERRANEAN DIET

The Mediterranean diet owes a lot of its popularity to the work of Ancel Keys, an American physiologist who investigated the links between diet and heart disease. In 1956, he began the Seven Countries Study, a long-term project examining the relationships between people's diets and lifestyles and their risk of heart disease and stroke. Teams spent years gathering health and lifestyle data from thousands of volunteers in the USA, Japan, Finland, the Netherlands, Italy, Greece, and parts of the former Yugoslavia (now Croatia and Serbia).

The first results were published in the '70s, and Keys' data showed that high blood cholesterol levels were linked to an increased risk of heart disease. He also found that, despite having a fairly high fat intake, Mediterranean volunteers generally had a much lower risk of heart disease compared to American and Northern European participants. Keys hypothesised that the unsaturated fats (such as vegetable oils) that featured heavily in Mediterranean diets had beneficial effects, while the saturated fats in meat and dairy had detrimental effects on heart health. This discovery has been supported by many other scientific studies since, and it played a major role in popularising the Mediterranean-style diet as a means to improve health.

THE MEDITERRANEAN IS A UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT THAT HAS NURTURED SOME OF THE WORLD'S MOST INFLUENTIAL CIVILISATIONS

trade with the wider world. For centuries the Romans dominated the region. Internal trade between the Roman provinces helped to spread regional produce and new imports around the empire, while external trade with India brought exotic spices to the region. Following the Islamic conquest of the Iberian Peninsula and Sicily in the Middle Ages, Muslim traders introduced various ingredients and crops from the Middle East and beyond, including apricots, aubergines, carrots, citrus fruits, rice and sugarcane. Further significant imports came in the 16th century following Spanish expeditions to the New World. Explorers returned with several popular additions, including potatoes, peppers and tomatoes. Today, it is almost impossible to imagine modern Mediterranean food without the latter.

While trade did spread common crops and produce throughout the Mediterranean, each region retained its own distinctive cuisines, cooking techniques and preferred ingredients. Take a simple dish like a stew, and you'll find herby French bouillabaisse, hearty Italian ragu, warming Turkish güveçs, fragrantly spiced Moroccan tagines, and many more besides. Even a staple food like bread varies, with the same basic ingredients transformed into regional specialties, such as the baguette, ciabatta,

pita, matzo, and khobz. While the modern diet uses the broad, catch-all term of 'Mediterranean', the abundance of regional specialties provide a great deal of variety and inspiration.

The Mediterranean diet itself is a relatively recent concept. The idea of 'Mediterranean' being a cuisine in its own right was popularised by the English food writer Elizabeth David in her hugely influential cookbook, *A Book of Mediterranean Food*, published in 1950. The book was credited with changing English eating habits by reintroducing fresh, colorful recipes to a post-war nation that was weary of years of rationing. It wasn't until the 1970s, when results from the Seven Countries Study were published (see boxout), that the scientific community and the general public began to take notice of the Mediterranean diet. In the decades since, there have been thousands of studies into Mediterranean-style diets, corroborating many of those initial findings and uncovering even more fantastic health benefits. It should come as no surprise, then, that the Mediterranean diet is one of the most widely followed eating plans in the world today, and has remained consistently popular while countless fad diets have come and gone.



THE CUISINES OF NORTH AFRICA COMBINE SUB-SAHARAN, ARABIC AND MEDITERRANEAN INFLUENCES

© Getty Images

WHAT IS THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET?

THIS POPULAR EATING PLAN HAS BEEN SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN TO IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE WEIGHT LOSS, BUT WHAT DOES A MEDITERRANEAN DIET INVOLVE?

Starting any new diet can be an intimidating process. You may be faced with an overwhelming amount of information about all the foods you can and can't eat, or you might even be forced to restock your cupboards with a strange selection of expensive and unfamiliar new ingredients. Thankfully, this is not the case here! The Mediterranean diet was inspired by the traditional eating habits of people from that part of the world (specifically parts of Italy, Greece and what is now Croatia). Although globalisation means that many Mediterraneans today have adopted more 'Western' eating habits,

the diet itself is based on research conducted between the 1950s and 1970s when people ate less meat and fewer convenience foods. Eating the Mediterranean way is incredibly simple, and doesn't rely on any obscure, hard-to-find ingredients. The focus is on fresh, unrefined produce that you can find in any greengrocer's or supermarket.

In general, the diet consists mainly of wholegrain products such as bread, pasta and rice, plus plenty of fresh fruits,

vegetables, legumes, nuts and seeds. These should make up most of your daily intake. Olive oil is used liberally for cooking, baking and in dressings, replacing the butter or lard often used in other cuisines. Antioxidant-packed red wine is also enjoyed in moderation, typically one or two glasses with meals a few times a week. Fish, seafood, poultry and eggs are typically eaten a few times a week, while full-fat dairy products like cheese and yogurt feature in modest daily amounts.

THERE IS NO CALORIE COUNTING INVOLVED, AND NO FOODS ARE EXPRESSLY FORBIDDEN

TIP

If reducing your meat intake is daunting, try making the change gradually over a few months.



WHETHER FRYING OR DRIZZLING, OLIVE OIL IS USED LIBERALLY IN MEDITERRANEAN KITCHENS

Red meat is eaten less often, or in much smaller portions, than in the standard Western diet, and sweet treats like cakes and pastries are enjoyed as treats a few times a month.

A key principle of the diet is quality over quantity. For example, by choosing wholegrain or wholewheat products over refined 'white' versions, you are getting more beneficial fibre; full-fat dairy products are more filling and satisfying than processed low-fat options; and reducing your meat intake may mean you can afford to choose higher-quality, higher-welfare and/or organic cuts. Where possible, try to buy local, seasonal produce too. Not only will this help to ensure your diet contains a wide variety of vitamins and minerals, but you'll get to enjoy fruits and vegetables when they are at their best. There's no contest between a fragrant, sweet strawberry that's in season compared to a bland, watery, out-of-season import.

The Mediterranean diet is nowhere near as restrictive as other diets. There is no calorie counting involved, and no foods are expressly forbidden, so you can still have the occasional treat. Occasional is the key word here, though. A juicy steak or a slice of cake should be enjoyed a couple of times a month, rather than daily or weekly. While the diet doesn't have strict rules, it's best not to stray too far from the core principles. The diet is based on the traditional eating habits of the region, where people would make meals from scratch using fresh produce. As common sense would tell you, ordering a takeaway pizza for dinner every day would not be a particularly good interpretation of a Mediterranean diet!

It's important to note that the Mediterranean diet is not a crash diet. It is a long-term lifestyle change that promotes steady, sustainable weight loss (when combined with reasonable portion control), or makes it easy to maintain a healthy weight, depending on your needs. A common problem for crash dieters is that, after they stop dieting, they end up regaining some, if not all of the weight they initially lost. By adopting healthy eating habits that are easy to stick to, you will be far more likely to keep weight off for good. The Mediterranean diet should ideally be something you choose to continue for the rest of your life in order to enjoy its wide-ranging health benefits.

THE MEDITERRANEAN FOOD PYRAMID



A food pyramid like the example above is a simple way to represent the proportions of what your diet should consist of. This example may look familiar – Mediterranean-style diets are very similar to the NHS's Eatwell Guide in the UK and the USDA's Dietary Guidelines in the US, which provide advice on what to eat and drink to help promote health and prevent disease.

There are some key differences between the Mediterranean diet and the typical Western diet to be aware of. The most obvious difference here is that the Mediterranean diet is more plant-based.

Red meat is recommended only as a small proportion of the Mediterranean diet. Another difference is that the Mediterranean diet incorporates more fish and seafood, whereas dairy and poultry are recommended in moderation.

The frequencies shown here are only a rough guide, but will help give you an idea of what your meals should contain. It's important to note that on top of the foods shown here, you should also be making sure you drink plenty of water (health experts recommend two litres or half a gallon every day) and stay active by doing moderate exercise most days.

INTRODUCTION

THE MEDITERRANEAN LIFESTYLE
- INCLUDING DIET, EXERCISE AND
SOCIALISING - IMPROVES BOTH
PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELLBEING



BENEFITS OF A MEDITERRANEAN DIET

FIND OUT WHY SWITCHING TO A MEDITERRANEAN DIET COULD BE
THE BEST INVESTMENT YOU EVER MAKE IN YOUR HEALTH

TIP

Always speak to your GP before starting any new diet or weight-loss programme.

There are plenty of diets out there that boast seemingly miraculous results, but very few are supported by decades of rigorous scientific research and recommended by health professionals. Mediterranean-style diets have been the subject of thousands of studies over the years, and scientists continue to learn more about their long-term effects on our health. The Mediterranean diet has been shown time and time again to be one of the healthiest ways to eat, and its benefits extend far beyond the typical diet selling point of weight loss. This lifestyle can have a considerable impact on both your physical and mental wellbeing, and it's even good for the environment, too. Here are just some of the ways a Mediterranean diet can change your life...

REDUCE YOUR RISK OF DISEASE

One of the best-studied aspects of the Mediterranean diet is its link to a lower risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD), such as heart attacks and strokes. CVD is the leading cause of death globally; in many cases, lifestyle factors play a major role in the development of CVD, and typically a diet that's high in saturated fat and sugar increases your risk. The Mediterranean diet is relatively low in saturated fat as it is less reliant on meat and dairy, so it naturally helps to minimize your risk of CVD. One study revealed that a Mediterranean-style diet can cut the risk of developing CVD by 25%, while another found that it reduces the risk of death from stroke by about 30%.

Having high blood cholesterol levels is another major risk factor for developing heart problems or suffering a stroke, but the balance of the *type* of cholesterol in our blood is also important. High levels of

A MEDITERRANEAN-STYLE DIET CAN REDUCE THE RISK OF DEVELOPING CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE BY 25% AND DEATH FROM STROKE BY ABOUT 30%

LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol can build up in the blood vessels and lead to blockages, while HDL (high-density lipoprotein) cholesterol is beneficial because it helps to remove LDL from the blood. Replacing saturated fats with unsaturated fats helps to reduce levels of harmful LDL and boosts levels of the beneficial LDL kind.

Besides CVD, the Mediterranean diet can help reduce the risk of other diseases such as type 2 diabetes, arthritis, cancer and dementia. These conditions have all been linked to chronic inflammation, where the body continues to produce an immune response when it doesn't need to. This in turn puts a lot of stress on cells and causes damage. The Mediterranean diet has been found to reduce levels of inflammation because it incorporates foods that are rich in polyphenols and antioxidants. These compounds have a protective effect in the body, and have been shown to help reduce and even repair cell damage.

IMPROVE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

We all have certain comfort foods that make us feel good, but our diet as a whole can have a more profound impact on our mental health. Research has found that a Western-style diet (high in refined grains, sugar and fat) can increase your risk of depression and anxiety. However, Mediterranean-style diets can decrease the risk of depression by

WATCHING YOUR WEIGHT



If weight loss is a goal for you, adopting a Mediterranean lifestyle can help you achieve this safely and sustainably. After a few weeks on the diet, many people find that weight loss occurs as a natural consequence, particularly if they have switched from a diet that is high in fat and sugar. If you are already a healthy weight, the Mediterranean diet combined with regular, moderate activity should make this easy to maintain without having to give it much thought. However, the diet does still rely

on having reasonable portion sizes, and you might find that the things you are supposed to have 'in moderation' slowly become more regular habits. This may be a struggle at first, so you might want to start a food diary to track exactly what you're eating and how often you are having things like meat, dairy and desserts. It can also be useful to keep an eye on your calorie intake, at least to begin with while you adapt to the new diet - apps like MyFitnessPal make this more convenient.

30%, and not just in adults. Mental health is a growing issue among young people, but one study found that adhering to a Mediterranean diet can help to reduce the risk of depression in adolescence.

The diet can also help to protect your overall brain health and cognitive function in later life. One study looked at the dietary habits of people in their 70s and performed brain scans to track changes in their brain volume (which naturally declines in old age). They found that participants who adhered more strictly to a Mediterranean-style diet tended to lose less of their total brain volume when compared to others. Other studies have found that a Mediterranean diet can help to protect people's memory and general cognitive abilities as they age.

YOU'LL LIVE LONGER

Researchers from Harvard University found that a Mediterranean diet

THE EARLIER YOU ADOPT A MEDITERRANEAN DIET, THE GREATER THE LONG-TERM BENEFITS WILL BE, BUT IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO START

can even improve longevity. They studied the impact that diet has on telomeres - structures at the end of our chromosomes that protect them from damage. Scientists use telomere length as a marker for aging and life expectancy: in general, shorter telomeres are associated with a reduced life expectancy and a higher risk of developing chronic disease. The more closely people followed a Mediterranean-style diet, the longer their telomeres tended to be, indicating a better life expectancy.

The earlier you adopt a Mediterranean diet, the greater the long-term benefits will be, but it's never too late to start. Studies have found that people who switch to the diet in their fifties and sixties were

less likely to experience chronic health problems in later life compared to those with less-healthy diets. Since prevention is better than cure, the Mediterranean diet can be an incredibly effective tool to promote healthy aging and improved quality of life in our later years.

IT CAN SAVE YOU MONEY

The Mediterranean lifestyle emphasises the importance of cooking fresh produce from scratch. While it may not be as convenient as ordering a takeaway or buying a microwave meal, it's certainly better for your health - and your wallet! One study found that participants who switched to a Mediterranean diet over a 34-week period ended up cutting their

TIP

A Mediterranean diet can also improve your sleep quality and reduce your risk of insomnia.

NOT ONLY CAN EATING LESS MEAT BE HEALTHIER FOR YOU, BUT IT CAN ALSO SAVE YOU MONEY

THE EARLIER YOU CAN START FOLLOWING A MEDITERRANEAN-STYLE DIET, THE GREATER ITS BENEFITS WILL BE

MEAT-FREE MEDITERRANEAN



The Mediterranean diet is naturally less reliant on meat and dairy than a typical Western diet, so it is very simple to adapt for pescatarians, vegetarians and vegans. You'll notice that a lot of Mediterranean dishes are naturally vegetarian or vegan due to the diet being largely plant-based, and its use of olive oil instead of butter. Meat substitutes such as soya or tofu (made from soybeans) can also be included in a Mediterranean diet. However, stick to fresh produce as much as possible, and keep an eye on the ingredients lists for any meat/dairy-free alternative products that you buy. Some items may contain added sugar or salt for extra flavor; nut milks are a common example of this, so look for unsweetened options or try making your own.

If you are a vegetarian or vegan, it's a good idea to speak to your GP or a qualified nutritionist before adopting a Mediterranean diet. Fish, meat and dairy products contain important nutrients that you may struggle to get enough of from other food groups, so you might be advised to take supplements.



grocery bills by over 50%! It can be really eye opening to see how much it is possible to save when you reduce your meat intake and take things like ready meals, high-sugar snacks and fizzy drinks out of the equation. The added bonus of spending less on food overall is that you have the option to invest more in quality (such as higher-welfare meat and dairy, and sustainably sourced fish) should you so choose.

IT'S MORE SUSTAINABLE

On the Mediterranean diet we are encouraged to eat local and seasonal produce as much as possible. This can have a dramatic impact on your carbon footprint compared to a typical Western diet. See if there are any farmers' markets near you to make the most of local produce - you might find them cheaper than the supermarkets, too. Diets that take a more plant-based approach have a lower environmental impact than those that rely more heavily on meat and dairy, so it's naturally a greener option. The Mediterranean diet can also be adapted for vegetarians and vegans (see the 'Meat-free Mediterranean' boxout) which can make it even more environmentally friendly.

IT'S EASY TO STICK TO

A major problem with many diets is that they are often intended to be temporary quick fixes, or they are so restrictive

that sticking with them in the long-term is simply unrealistic. One reason why the Mediterranean diet is so popular is because it is a common-sense approach - there are no gimmicks, no starving yourself, and no need to cut out entire food groups. Convenience is key for something to be sustainable, and on a Mediterranean diet, all the ingredients you'll need can be found at your regular food stores. What's more, there's such a huge variety of Mediterranean recipes available to try, you won't end up bored from eating the same bland diet meals every day. You don't have to worry about 'ruining' your diet if you have a treat every once in a while either; as long as you take the Mediterranean approach most of the time, you will enjoy the diet's health benefits.



SUSTAINABILITY IS A KEY PART OF THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET, WITH LOCAL AND SEASONAL PRODUCE ENCOURAGED

WHAT TO EAT & DRINK

IN A MEDITERRANEAN DIET, THESE FOODS AND DRINKS WILL MAKE UP THE MAJORITY OF YOUR MEALS AND SHOULD BE ENJOYED EVERY DAY



OLIVE OIL

Olive oil is almost synonymous with Mediterranean cuisine. It's the diet's main source of fat, used for frying, roasting, baking and drizzling over salads – whenever you would normally use butter or other types of oil. It's packed with beneficial antioxidants and unsaturated fats, the latter of which have been

proven to reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, compared to the saturated fats in butter. Choose extra-virgin olive oil and buy the best quality for your budget. Avoid varieties that contain a mixture of different oils, or those that come in transparent bottles as sunlight degrades the oil quality.



VEGETABLES

Delicious, nutrient-packed vegetables should be a major part of your Mediterranean-style meals, so getting your five (or more) a day should be easy. Each type of vegetable offers a different selection of vitamins and minerals, so aim to eat a variety – from starchy potatoes and earthy beetroot to crunchy carrots and crisp greens. Fresh, seasonal veg is the best option, but frozen and tinned are better than none. The Mediterranean diet is less reliant on meat, meaning vegetables are often the main event. Although they're not technically veg, mushrooms bring a lovely 'meatiness' to recipes as well.



GRAINS

Cereals such as wheat are among the most important crops in the Mediterranean. The grains from these plants make up a significant portion of the diet, often in the form of bread, pasta and rice. Other grains commonly used around the Mediterranean include barley, oats, durum wheat (for couscous) and corn (for polenta). Use wholegrain varieties where possible – they contain more of the all-important fibre that makes grains so beneficial for digestive health. Diets that include plenty of wholegrain foods are linked to a reduced risk of heart disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes, and even some forms of cancer.

PULSES

Pulses like beans, peas and lentils are important sources of protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals. They make a nutritious addition to meals, as well as providing bulk and texture to stews, soups, salads, dips and more. If you don't already eat a lot of pulses, it is recommended that you increase your intake gradually and drink plenty of water, otherwise the sudden increase in fibre can cause some temporary digestive discomfort. Some plant-based meat alternatives like tofu are made from pulses, but avoid brands that contain highly processed oils, added sugar and excess salt if you are using these.



COFFEE AND TEAS

A daily coffee or two can help protect against heart disease and boost metabolism. But be aware that the high levels of sugar/dairy in takeaway drinks like lattes and frappés might counteract coffee's benefits, so keep things simple by either enjoying it black or keeping any added dairy or sugar to a minimum. Regular consumption of tea (including black, green or herbal) has also been linked to a longer life, reduced risk of heart disease and reduced stress. Certain types of herbal teas can also help to soothe minor health complaints, encourage restful sleep and boost your immune system.



FRUITS

Fruits make a delicious, healthy choice for daily desserts and snacks. As with vegetables, you should aim to include several daily portions of fruit in your diet to enjoy a wide range of vitamins and minerals. 'Eat the rainbow' is a good rule of thumb to ensure variety, so pick different colors of fruit (and veg) when you shop. Choose fresh and seasonal fruits where possible, although frozen or tinned options are suitable alternatives. However, watch out for any tinned fruit that's steeped in syrup to avoid unnecessary added sugar. Whole fruits are better than juices, because you will get all the beneficial fibre.

NUTS & SEEDS

Packed full of healthy unsaturated fats, vitamins and minerals, nuts and seeds are nutritional powerhouses. Each type has different benefits – for example, just a small handful of walnuts contains your full daily recommended omega-3 fatty acids, while sesame seeds are rich in B vitamins, iron and magnesium. Nuts and seeds make a great snack on their own, but they are also wonderfully versatile: they work well in both sweet and savoury dishes; they can be toasted to deepen their flavor; blitzed into flours, nut butters and pastes (like tahini); and even soaked and blended to make homemade nut milks.



HERBS & SPICES

From the herbs of Provence to the fragrant spices of Morocco, Mediterranean meals will often feature one or more of these flavor-packed seasonings. Not only can herbs and spices make dishes extra tasty, but some of them have health-boosting properties too. For example, oregano is high in antioxidants

and vitamin K and may also help to reduce inflammation in the body, while cinnamon can help to regulate blood sugar levels and may also boost the 'good' bacteria in our guts. Even the kitchen staple of black pepper may help to reduce cholesterol levels and improve the absorption of other nutrients inside the body.

WHAT TO HAVE IN MODERATION

THESE FOODS SHOULD SUPPLEMENT THE CORE COMPONENTS OF THE DIET OUTLINED ON PAGES 14-15.
THEY CAN BE ENJOYED IN MODEST REGULAR SERVINGS, OR LARGER MONTHLY PORTIONS

FISH & SEAFOOD

Compared to a standard Western diet, fish and seafood are eaten more regularly on a Mediterranean diet. Aim for two or three portions weekly, with at least one being an oily fish like salmon or mackerel. Oily fishes are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which are beneficial for heart and brain health.



RED MEAT

Beef, pork, lamb and other red meats should only be enjoyed occasionally. This could be small portions to flavor a dish or larger portions a couple of times a month. The regular consumption of red meat (particularly processed meat) has been found to increase the risk of cardiovascular disease.



POULTRY

While fish is the main animal protein in a Mediterranean diet, poultry can also be eaten in moderate amounts - meat should supplement a meal rather than be the main event. Aim for one or two portions of poultry each week, and buy the highest-quality/welfare meat that your budget will allow.



DESSERTS & SWEETS

Fruit should be your go-to sweet snack or dessert, but you are still able to enjoy cakes and pastries. However, these should be enjoyed in moderation just a few times a month or saved for special occasions, rather than everyday indulgences.

DAIRY PRODUCTS

Dairy products like milk, yogurt and cheese are still on the menu, but stick to small, daily portions or larger, weekly portions to avoid regularly over-indulging. Full-fat dairy is closer to the traditional eating habits the diet is based on, compared to modern low-fat options that may contain added sugar.



EGGS

Eggs are a wonderful source of high-quality protein and vitamins A, D, B2 and B12. Although the yolks contain cholesterol, studies have shown that this does not cause the same negative effects that eating saturated fat does, so enjoy the whole egg. An average of one egg per day is recommended.



RED WINE

Red wine is rich in powerful antioxidants called polyphenols, which help to prevent or reverse cell damage in the body and can therefore help protect you against disease. Studies have found that drinking red wine in moderation - a small glass or two per day with meals - is linked to lower blood pressure, lower levels of inflammation, and even a lower risk of depression. If you don't drink wine, you can get similar benefits from dark-skinned grapes in the form of juice (look for brands with no added sugar) and by eating the fruits themselves, which provides the added bonus of fibre.

WHAT TO AVOID

TO GET THE BEST HEALTH BENEFITS FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET, THESE FOODS SHOULD IDEALLY BE AVOIDED ALTOGETHER. IF YOU DO INDULGE, DON'T MAKE IT A HABIT



CONVENIENCE & 'JUNK' FOOD

A huge part of the Mediterranean diet and broader lifestyle is the idea that meals should be cooked from scratch and savoured. The concept of fast food, eating on-the-go, takeaways and microwave meals goes against the spirit of the Mediterranean approach. Junk foods in particular are often high in saturated fats and/or sugar, which should be avoided in this eating plan. However, the pace of modern life can make convenience foods inevitable at times; use your judgement and opt for the best option available to you – choose a supermarket vegetable pasta salad for lunch rather than a buttery bacon sandwich, for example.



FIZZY DRINKS

High-sugar sodas play havoc with the body's blood sugar levels – some brands contain the equivalent of nine teaspoons of sugar in a single can. Regular consumption of fizzy drinks can lead to a variety of health problems, including increased risk of obesity, diabetes and tooth decay. 'Diet' versions may not contain any sugar, but studies suggest that the artificial sweeteners they use instead can harm the good bacteria in our guts, and may also negatively affect the body's metabolism. Energy drinks should be avoided for the same reasons, along with the potentially detrimental effects of their excessive caffeine content.



BUTTER

Butter is very high in saturated fat, which is linked to an increased risk of heart disease. Historically, butter was more commonly used in Northern Europe, whereas the Southern Europeans used olive oil. Butter would have been rarely used – if at all – in a traditional Mediterranean diet. This should be fairly easy to avoid, as olive oil will take its place in most of your cooking. You can also find olive oil spreads, but be sure to check the ingredients lists as some brands contain a mixture of other vegetable oils, or a blend of butter and olive oil.



OTHER ALCOHOLIC DRINKS

While moderate consumption of red wine is allowed on a Mediterranean diet, other alcoholic drinks such as beers, ciders, spirits and cocktails are best avoided. Studies have shown that beers, spirits and white wine (which is made without the antioxidant-packed grape skins) do not appear to have the same health benefits as red wine. Drinks like ciders, spirits with mixers, liqueurs and cocktails are also typically high in sugar, and therefore pose a similar problem to fizzy drinks as mentioned above. If you are going to have a drink, always do so in moderation and with meals.

THE MEDITERRANEAN LIFESTYLE

BEYOND THE BENEFITS OF THE DIET ITSELF, EMBRACING OTHER TRADITIONAL MEDITERRANEAN HABITS CAN HELP YOU LIVE A LONGER, HEALTHIER AND HAPPIER LIFE



REGULAR INTERACTIONS WITH ACQUAINTANCES, LIKE YOUR LOCAL BARISTA, BOOST YOUR MENTAL WELLBEING

The Mediterranean diet has been scientifically proven to promote good health, but adopting a Mediterranean approach in other aspects of your life can also have a significant positive impact on your physical and mental wellbeing.

SOCIALISING & COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Regular socialising is a cornerstone of the Mediterranean lifestyle. Research has shown that having strong social bonds promotes good quality of life and mental health. For example, people who frequently socialise have a lower risk of hypertension and depression. Family life and friendship are at the heart of

MEDITERRANEAN MEALTIMES ARE A SOCIAL OCCASION AND A WELCOME CHANCE TO SPEND TIME WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Mediterranean life, but it may surprise you to learn that even our relationships with casual acquaintances (known as 'weak ties') are beneficial too, as they foster a greater sense of belonging and community spirit. Studies have shown that older adults with a diverse network of weak ties and close ties (family and friends) enjoy a better quality of life and live longer than those with narrower social circles.

MAKE THE MOST OF MEALTIMES

It's not just what you eat, but how. Mediterranean mealtimes are a social occasion and a welcome chance to spend time with family and friends. How many of us are guilty of having a hurried lunch 'al desko' or eating dinner in front of the television? Try to make time to really savour and enjoy your meals properly, whether that means taking your office lunch to the park with a book, eating together with



TAKING REGULAR EXERCISE AND ENJOYING NATURE ARE IMPORTANT ELEMENTS IN ANY HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

colleagues, or sitting up at the dinner table together as a family. Allowing yourself time to appreciate both your food and company brings a range of benefits. Not only do we get the perks of socialising, but as conversation flows we naturally tend to eat more slowly when dining with others, which is better for your digestion. Spending quality time with others and taking breaks from the various stresses of the day is also hugely important for our mental health.

STAY ACTIVE

The benefits of regular exercise are well established, but keeping fit doesn't mean that you have to dedicate an hour every day to a strenuous high-intensity workout at the gym. Traditional Mediterranean communities naturally got their exercise as part of their daily routines, such as walking to town or through physical work like farming and fishing. Moderate, regular exercise is all that's needed to maintain a good level of fitness, as long as it gets your heart rate up. The 'best' exercise is anything that's easy to incorporate into your daily life and – most importantly – something you enjoy doing. That way you're more likely to stick at it. So whether it's swimming, a dance class, yoga or a brisk walk, aim

for five to ten hours of physical activity each week.

GET OUTDOORS

Not all of us are able to enjoy the balmy temperatures and sunshine of the Mediterranean, but getting outside and enjoying nature is still important no matter where you live. Modern life has led to us spending far more time indoors, but studies have shown that being in nature is beneficial to our mental health as it can help reduce stress, anxiety and depression. Regular exposure to sunlight is also an important source of vitamin D, which plays a vital role in keeping our bones, teeth and muscles healthy. Most people will get enough vitamin D in the summer months by being out in the sunshine for brief periods of time with forearms or lower legs uncovered (follow health advice and use sunscreen or cover up to avoid burning). Depending on where in the world you are, it may be more difficult to get enough vitamin D from sunlight alone in the winter months. Vitamin D is found in oily fish, eggs and red meat, but it may be difficult to get enough from food alone while following a Mediterranean diet, so consider speaking to your GP about taking supplements to top up your levels.

THE SECRETS OF BLUE ZONES



BLUE-ZONE RESIDENTS TYPICALLY LIVE LONGER AND ENJOY A GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE INTO OLD AGE

The Mediterranean contains two of the five regions known as 'Blue Zones': the Italian island of Sardinia and the Greek island of Ikaria. Blue Zones were identified during a *National Geographic* investigation into longevity, and also include Okinawa in Japan, Nicoya in Costa Rica and a religious community in Loma Linda, California. In these parts of the world, locals consistently live longer than the general population, with unusually high rates of people living well into their 90s and beyond – yet there are relatively low incidences of age-related diseases like dementia.

Researchers have since studied the lifestyles of Blue Zone populations in an attempt to understand this phenomenon. While diet is believed to be a major factor, other common characteristics include a strong focus on family and community, regular social contact and a moderately active lifestyle.

The most important thing the researchers learned, however, was that the healthy choices these people made were the easiest options available to them. For example, fresh produce was often more readily available than high-fat/sugar processed foods. The Blue Zones Project has used these findings as a model to help communities elsewhere enjoy similar benefits via local policy changes and education drives, making it easier for people to make healthy choices.



SERVINGS 4

PREP TIME 30-40 MINS

REST TIME 1 HR 30 MINS

COOK TIME 20 MINS

QUILTED OLIVE AND HALLOUMI LOAF

THESE REGAL, PUFFY LOAVES ARE THE PERFECT ACCOMPANIMENT TO A MEDITERRANEAN SPREAD, AS THEY ARE MADE FOR SHARING AND TEARING

722 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

17.6oz STRONG BREAD FLOUR
0.2oz DRIED YEAST OR 0.4oz FRESH YEAST
4TBSP OLIVE OIL, PLUS EXTRA FOR GREASING
2TSP SEA SALT
3.5oz HALLOUMI, CUT INTO 4 SLICES
4TSP PESTO
1 EGG, BEATEN
5.3oz PITTED OLIVES, ANY COLOUR

STEP 1 Tip the flour into a bowl and stir in the yeast. Add 10floz | 1¼ cups lukewarm water and combine to form a dough. Add the olive oil and salt, and then knead the dough, either in a mixer with a dough hook, or on a lightly floured surface, for 8-10 mins until smooth and elastic.

STEP 2 Put the dough into an oiled bowl and smother the top with a little more oil. Cover with a clean damp tea towel and leave in a warm place to prove for 1 hr or until almost doubled in size.

STEP 3 Divide the dough into 6 pieces. Then divide 2 of the pieces in half again. Shape the 4 large pieces into flat discs, and place a slice of halloumi and 1tsp pesto into the center of each. Fold the dough over, pinching the seams firmly together.

STEP 4 Place on a flour-dusted baking tray. Put a damp cloth on top and prove for a further 30 mins. Cover the smaller pieces in cling film and place in the fridge.

STEP 5 Preheat the oven to 220°C (200°C fan) | 430°F | gas 7. On a floured cutting board, roll the smaller dough pieces into 6" rounds. Create a lattice pattern by making alternating incisions with a sharp knife.

STEP 6 Brush the halloumi-filled rolls with the egg. Stretch a smaller piece of dough over each to expose the holes and tuck the edges underneath. Press half an olive into each gap.

STEP 7 Cook the rolls for 20 mins. Serve them warm.

TIP

Swap the pesto filling for tapenade for an extra olivey delight!

YOU COULD EXPERIMENT WITH THE TOPPINGS YOU USE TO ADORN THE LOAF. WE KEPT IT SIMPLE WITH MIXED OLIVES, BUT YOU COULD DRESS YOURS UP WITH CAPERS, PICKLES – EVEN CHUNKS OF FRESH VEG TO MAKE THEM EVEN MORE VIBRANT.



SERVINGS 1

PREP TIME 5 MINS

COOK TIME 25 MINS

MEDITERRANEAN STUFFED PEPPER

USING LEFTOVER RATATOUILLE, THIS MAKES THE PERFECT LIGHT MEAL FOR WHEN YOU HAVEN'T GOT A LOT OF TIME TO PREP!

181 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

1 SMALL RED PEPPER
3.5oz RATATOUILLE (SEE PAGE 64)
0.7oz MATURE CHEESE (OPTIONAL)
A FEW SMALL BASIL LEAVES

STEP 1 Cut the top off the pepper and scoop out the seeds. Place it in a shallow ovenproof dish, spoon the ratatouille into the pepper.

STEP 2 Preheat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan) | 390°F | gas 6. Bake the pepper for 20 mins or until the pepper is cooked.

STEP 3 If using, sprinkle the cheese over the stuffed pepper and return to the oven for 5 mins or until the cheese starts to melt and brown. Garnish with the basil leaves.

TIP

If you are really pressed for time, you can find ready-made tinned ratatouille in most supermarkets.



WATERMELON, MINT AND FETA SALAD

WE'VE USED TURKISH FETA IN THIS SALAD BUT THE GREEK VARIETY
WILL WORK JUST AS WELL – IT'S JUST LESS CREAMY

368-245 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

2 RED ONIONS, FINELY SLICED
4TBSP RED WINE VINEGAR
3TBSP CASTER SUGAR
5FLOZ | 10TBSP EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL
2 GARLIC CLOVES, CRUSHED
1TBSP DRIED MINT
16OZ FETA CHEESE, CUT INTO TRIANGLES
(OPTIONAL, SEE TIP)
4TBSP PUMPKIN SEEDS
SEA SALT AND FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER
1 WATERMELON, CUT INTO TRIANGLES
3.5OZ PITTED BLACK OLIVES
A FEW SPRIGS OF FRESH MINT, TO SERVE

STEP 1 Mix the onions with the vinegar and sugar. Stir well and set aside. Mix the olive oil with the garlic and dried mint. If using, carefully spread out the feta in a shallow dish, pour over the oil mixture and cover with clingfilm. Leave to marinate for at least 4 hrs or overnight.

STEP 2 Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan) | 355°F | gas 4. Toss the pumpkin seeds with sea salt, black pepper and a little oil, and bake for 15 mins or until just starting to brown. Drain on kitchen paper.

STEP 3 When you're ready to serve, drain the onions and spread over a large, shallow dish. Top with feta (if using), interspersing the slices with watermelon. Spoon over the olive oil marinade then sprinkle over the pumpkin seeds and olives, and add a few sprigs of fresh mint.

TIP

Omitting the feta in this salad makes it vegan-friendly. You could try adding a 'Greek-style' dairy-free alternative.

HAM AND MANCHEGO CROQUETTES

THESE ARE UTTERLY MOREISH – PREPARE AHEAD
AND POP IN THE OVEN TO REHEAT

133 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

4TBSP OLIVE OIL, PLUS PLENTY MORE FOR
DEEP FRYING

1 SHALLOT

2.5oz IBÉRICO HAM, DICED VERY SMALL,
PLUS 2.5oz EXTRA TO SERVE

3.5oz PLAIN FLOUR

2.5FLOZ | 5TBSP VEGETABLE STOCK

11FLOZ | 1⅓ CUPS MILK

1.8oz MANCHEGO CHEESE, GRATED
QUINCE PASTE, TO SERVE

FOR THE CRUMB:

2.6oz PLAIN FLOUR

2 LARGE EGGS, BEATEN

3.5oz BREADCRUMBS (WE HAVE USED
PANKO CRUMBS)

STEP 1 Heat the oil in a pan, add the shallot, and sauté until soft but not colored. Stir in the diced ham, fry for 1 min, then add the flour and fry over a medium heat until the mixture is golden.

STEP 2 Heat the stock and milk in a small pan until hot but not boiling. Then gradually add this liquid to the roux, stirring all the time. Continue to cook for 5 mins until it thickens. Add the cheese and season with black pepper. Pour the sauce onto a small baking tray then cover with clingfilm. Leave it to cool then put it in the fridge for 1 hr.

STEP 3 For the crumb, put the flour, eggs and crumbs into 3 bowls. Dust your hands with flour, take some of the cheese mixture and roll it to a walnut-sized ball. Dust with flour, then roll in the egg and then the breadcrumbs. Put on a tray and chill for 30-45 mins.

STEP 4 If you have a deep-fat fryer, heat the oil to 175°C | 350°F and fry the croquettes for 2 mins. If not, heat the oil in a frying pan until it starts to shimmer, then add 3-4 croquettes at a time and fry until golden. You don't want them to cook too quickly otherwise the center won't be hot enough. Serve warm with the slices of ham and quince paste.

TIP

Vegetarians can replace the ham in the croquettes with diced mushrooms and serve with other antipasti like artichokes and olives.

SERVINGS 20-24

PREP TIME 15-20 MINS

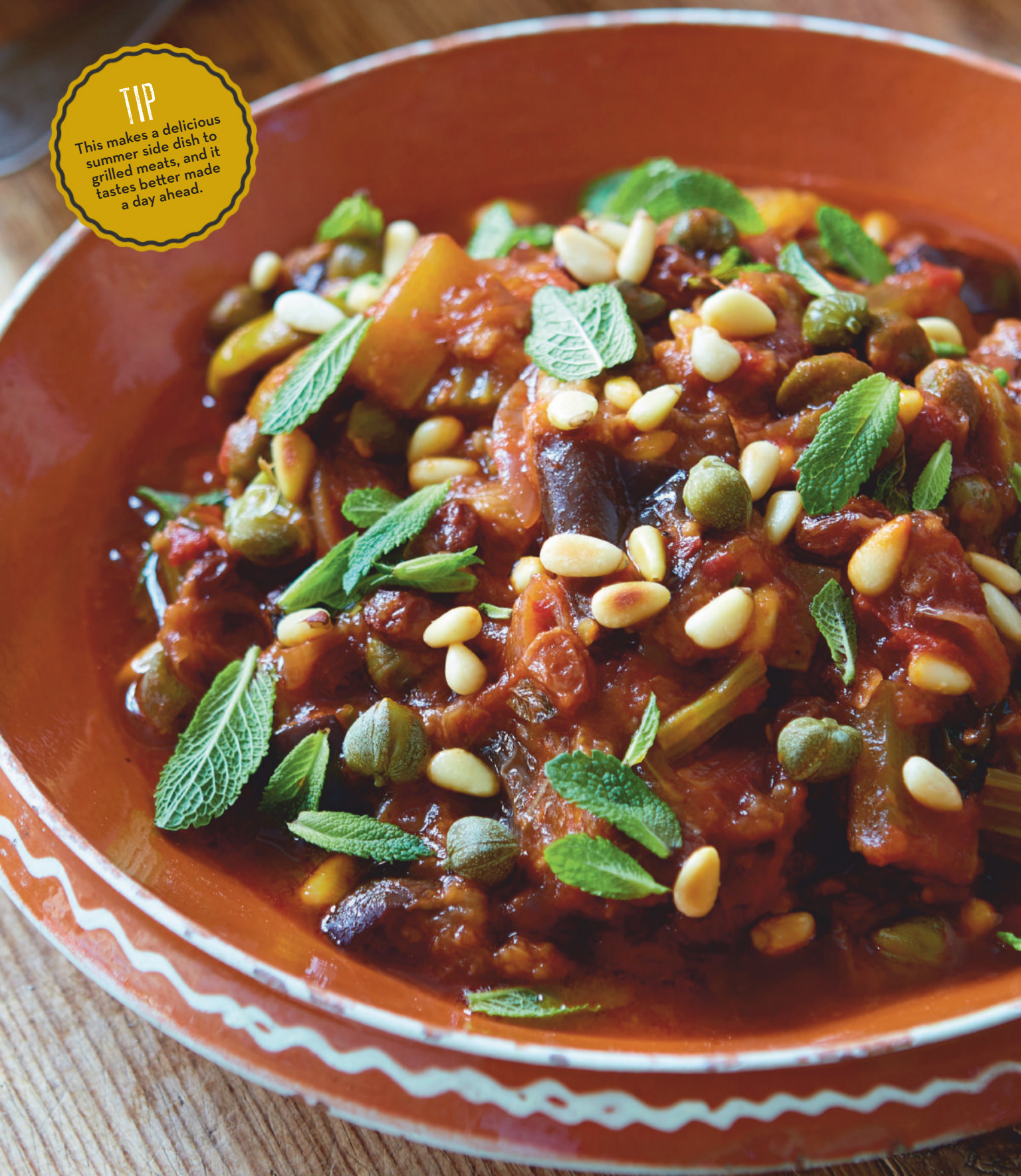
CHILL TIME 1 HR 45 MINS

COOK TIME 10-12 MINS



TIP

This makes a delicious summer side dish to grilled meats, and it tastes better made a day ahead.



SERVINGS 8

PREP TIME 10-15 MINS

REST TIME 30 MINS

COOK TIME 50 MINS

SICILIAN AUBERGINE SALAD

THIS SALAD, WITH ITS SWEET AND SOUR BALANCE OF FLAVORS,
IS A REAL ITALIAN CLASSIC

174 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

2 LARGE AUBERGINES, ABOUT 2LB, CUT INTO 0.75" DICE

SEA SALT AND FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER

3TBSP OLIVE OIL, PLUS EXTRA FOR FRYING

1 LARGE RED ONION, SLICED

2 CELERY STICKS, CUT INTO 0.75" DICE

2 RED PEPPERS, SLICED

5.3oz RIPE TOMATOES, DICED

1.4oz CAPERS

1.4oz PITTED GREEN OLIVES, QUARTERED

1.4oz SULTANAS

1TBSP SUGAR

1.7FLOZ | 10TBSP PASSATA

3.4FLOZ | SCANT 1/2 CUP RED WINE VINEGAR

1.4oz PINE NUTS, TOASTED, TO SERVE

A SMALL BUNCH MINT OR BASIL, LEAVES ONLY, TO SERVE

STEP 1 Lightly salt the diced aubergine and leave for 30 mins in a colander over a sink, then pat dry. Heat a wide, deep pan one-third full of olive oil until it reaches 190°C | 375°F, or a cube of bread dropped in turns golden immediately. Fry the aubergine cubes in batches until golden. Allow the oil to reach that temperature again between each batch. Drain the aubergine on kitchen paper.

STEP 2 Heat the 3tbsp olive oil in a large, wide pan over a medium-low heat; cook the onion, celery and peppers with a pinch of salt until soft and beginning to color. Cook for another min, then add the diced tomatoes and cook for another few mins.

STEP 3 Stir in the capers, olives, sultanas, sugar, passata and vinegar, bring to the boil, then add the fried aubergine. Season to taste, turn the heat right down and simmer gently for 30 mins. Remove from the heat and allow to cool. It tastes better made the day before serving and will keep for 5 days in the fridge, but allow it to come to room temperature before serving with the pine nuts and mint scattered over.

THIS SALAD, KNOWN AS CAPONATA, IS A GREAT GO-TO FOR BARBECUES FOR A CROWD. YOU CAN MAKE IT TWO DAYS AHEAD THEN ALLOW IT TO COME TO ROOM TEMP BEFORE ADDING THE PINE NUTS AND HERBS.



SERVINGS 10

PREP TIME 5-10 MINS

COOK TIME 35 MINS

TIP

This dish can also be enjoyed at room temperature, so it makes a nutritious addition to a packed lunch.

VEGGIE FRITTATA WITH PADRÓN PEPPERS AND GREENS

HAVE FUN GAMBLING WITH YOUR PADRÓN PEPPERS – ONE IN EVERY 20 IS SAID TO BE FIERY HOT!

162 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

1TBSP OLIVE OIL
1 LEEK, SLICED INTO COINS
2 GARLIC CLOVES, CRUSHED
5.3oz BROAD BEANS
4.4oz ASPARAGUS, CHOPPED INTO 2" PIECES (RESERVE A FEW WHOLE)
A SMALL BUNCH EACH OF MINT AND BASIL, LEAVES ONLY, PLUS A FEW TO GARNISH
8 EGGS, BEATEN
5.3oz MANCHEGO CHEESE, CUBED
4.5oz PADRÓN PEPPERS
SEA SALT AND FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER

STEP 1 Preheat the oven to 190°C (170°C fan) | 375°F | gas 5. Heat the oil in an ovenproof frying pan and gently cook the leek and garlic for 5 mins until soft. Meanwhile, blanch the broad beans in boiling water for 2 mins.

STEP 2 Add the beans, asparagus, mint and basil to the frying pan and fry for a further 5 mins. Pour over the eggs and add the cheese. Cook over a low heat for 5 mins, until the eggs are half set. Transfer to the oven and cook for 10-15 mins.

STEP 3 While the frittata is cooking, heat a griddle pan to high and char the whole asparagus and Padrón peppers for a few mins. Sprinkle generously with salt and pepper. Serve the frittata with the reserved mint and basil leaves, the Padrón peppers and whole asparagus, plus a mixed leaf salad, if liked.

TOMATO BREAD WITH ANCHOVIES

THIS QUICK AND EASY SAUCE IS A DELICIOUS SAUCE IN ITSELF,
BUT HERE WE ARE USING IT AS A TASTY SPREAD

493 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

3.4FLOZ | SCANT 1/2 CUP OLIVE OIL

5 GARLIC CLOVES

17.6oz RIPE TOMATOES

SEA SALT AND FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER

TO SERVE, PER PERSON:

2 SLICES TOASTED SOURDOUGH BREAD

4 ANCHOVIES, FROM TINNED, DRAINED

STEP 1 Gently warm the oil in a large sauté pan. Add the garlic and allow this to infuse for 10 mins.

STEP 2 Add the tomatoes and leave them to cook gently until mushy. Put the whole mixture through a vegetable mill, potato ricer or colander to remove the skins. Season the sauce well with sea salt and black pepper.

STEP 3 To serve, spread 2tbsp sauce onto each slice of toasted bread and top with the anchovies. To store in the fridge, pour it into a sterilised jam jar and keep it well sealed.

THIS RECIPE IS A TAKE ON PAN CON TOMATE, A SIMPLE SPANISH TAPAS THAT CAN ALSO BE ENJOYED AS A SAVOURY BREAKFAST.



MAKES 13.5 FL OZ

COOK TIME 20-25 MINS

TIP

This recipe can also be made in bulk and frozen in portions. It can serve as a base for other tomato sauces, and goes well with pasta.





SERVINGS 6

PREP TIME 5-10 MINS

COOK TIME 5 MINS

GAMBAS WITH AIOLI

COOKING THE PRAWNS WITH THEIR SHELLS AND HEADS ON
BOOSTS THE FLAVOR OF THIS TAPAS CLASSIC

246 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

18 PRAWNS, WITH HEAD AND SHELL ON

2 TSP SMOKED PAPRIKA

1.7 FLOZ | 10 TBSP OLIVE OIL

2 TBSP SHERRY VINEGAR

2 TBSP FLAT-LEAF PARSLEY, CHOPPED. TO
SERVE (OPTIONAL)

LEMON WEDGES, TO SERVE

FOR THE AIOLI:

2 LARGE GARLIC CLOVES, CRUSHED

½ LEMON, JUICE ONLY

1 EGG YOLK, LIGHTLY WHISKED

4.2 FLOZ | ½ CUP EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

STEP 1 Toss the prawns with the paprika and set aside to marinate. For the aioli, place the garlic, lemon juice and egg yolk in a bowl. Slowly add the oil using an electric whisk until the mixture becomes thick and creamy. Check the seasoning and add more lemon juice or garlic if necessary, then set aside.

STEP 2 Heat the oil in a pan until hot and cook the prawns for 2-3 mins on each side, until almost cooked. Add the vinegar for the last 30 secs and cook it off.

STEP 3 Remove the prawns from the heat, top with parsley (if using) and serve with the lemon wedges and aioli.



MEDITERRANEAN LAYERED SANDWICHES

PACKED WITH TASTY VEG AND OOZY MOZZARELLA,
THESE CIABATTAS ARE GUARANTEED TO IMPRESS

336 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

2 CIABATTA LOAVES

1-2TBSP (LEVEL) BASIL PESTO

4TBSP EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

2x 7oz JARS ROASTED RED
PEPPERS, DRAINED

4 PLUM TOMATOES, SLICED

4-6TBSP PITTED BLACK OLIVES, SLICED
FRESH BASIL LEAVES, TORN

2x 4.4oz PACKETS MOZZARELLA, DRAINED
AND SLICED

IF MAKING TO GO, YOU WILL NEED:

BAKING PARCHMENT, STRING

STEP 1 Cut the ciabatta loaves in half lengthways. Mix the pesto and olive oil together, then brush this over the cut surfaces of the bread.

STEP 2 Use half of the rest of the ingredients for each loaf. Working on 1 loaf at a time, spread half the peppers over the bottom of the loaf, then arrange half the sliced plum tomatoes on top. Season, and add the olives and basil.

STEP 3 Top with the mozzarella slices then layer up the remaining ingredients in reverse order (ie torn basil, olives, tomato slices and then the peppers).

TIP

If you're taking these for a packed lunch or a picnic, keep the loaves wrapped to serve, but slice them before leaving the house.

STEP 4 Place the top on the loaf, then wrap it in parchment paper and tie tightly with string to hold it together. Fill the other loaf and wrap it in the same way.



ROASTED MED VEG AND FETA

THIS VEGGIE-FRIENDLY POT IS JUST THE THING
FOR A SIMPLE AND SATISFYING PACKED LUNCH

280 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

7oz AUBERGINE, CUT INTO SMALL CHUNKS
7oz ZUCCHINI, CUT INTO SMALL CHUNKS
1 SMALL RED ONION, CHOPPED
A FEW LEAVES FRESH OREGANO OR THYME
2 GARLIC CLOVES, CRUSHED
1-2TSP RAS EL HANOUT (TO TASTE)
SEA SALT AND FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER
EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL, TO DRIZZLE
1 LEMON, ZEST AND JUICE
2 HANDFULS BABY SPINACH (ABOUT 1.8oz)
A FEW LEAVES FRESH PARSLEY
1.8oz FETA CHEESE, CRUMBLD (OR 2TSP
MIXED SEEDS)

STEP 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan) | 390°F | gas 6. Toss together the aubergine, zucchini, onion, oregano or thyme, garlic and ras el hanout, and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Spread out onto a lined baking tray and drizzle with the olive oil. Roast for 15-20 mins, or until golden brown. Scatter over the lemon zest and add a squeeze of juice. Leave to cool.

STEP 2 Put the cooked vegetables into the base of a Kilner or large screw-top jar. Place the spinach leaves on top with the parsley leaves and crumbled feta or seeds. Cover and chill until ready to eat.

TIP

The salty feta helps season the veggies, but you could swap it for a few Parmesan shavings.

SPANISH CHICKEN SKEWERS WITH PATATAS BRAVAS

THESE SIMPLE AND DELICIOUS SKEWERS ARE IDEAL FOR SHARING

300 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE CHICKEN:

8 SKINLESS, BONELESS CHICKEN THIGHS, CUT INTO 1" PIECES

2 TBSP OLIVE OIL

4 GARLIC CLOVES, CRUSHED

3.4 FLOZ | SCANT 1/2 CUP DRY SHERRY

2 TBSP HONEY

FOR THE PATATAS BRAVAS:

5 TBSP OLIVE OIL

2.2 LB WAXY POTATOES, PEELED AND CUT INTO 0.75" CHUNKS

2 GARLIC CLOVES, CRUSHED

1/2 RED CHILLI, FINELY CHOPPED

8.8 OZ PASSATA

1/2 TBSP TOMATO PURÉE

1 TBSP SHERRY VINEGAR

1 TSP PAPRIKA (SMOKED OR SWEET)

1/2 TSP CASTER SUGAR

MAYONNAISE, TO SERVE (OPTIONAL)

YOU WILL NEED:

8 LONG WOODEN SKEWERS, SOAKED IN WATER FOR 1 HR

STEP 1 Toss the chicken pieces with the oil, garlic, sherry and honey. Marinate for 30 mins or overnight in the fridge.

STEP 2 Preheat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan) | 390°F | gas 6. For the patatas bravas, pour 3tbsp oil into a roasting tray and heat for 10 mins, then toss the potatoes in it and season. Roast for 50 mins, turning halfway through, until golden and really crispy.

STEP 3 Heat the remaining oil in a pan and cook the garlic and chilli for 2 mins.

STEP 4 Add the passata, tomato purée, vinegar, paprika and sugar with plenty of seasoning and cook for 10 mins.

STEP 5 Meanwhile, thread the chicken onto the skewers and cook on a hot griddle pan or on the barbecue for 5-6 mins each side, until the chicken is cooked through and the edges are charred. You may need to finish the skewers off in the oven if some of the chicken is thicker.

STEP 6 To serve, spread the spicy tomato sauce over the base of a serving platter or individual plates, spread over the potatoes, drizzle with mayonnaise and top with chicken skewers.

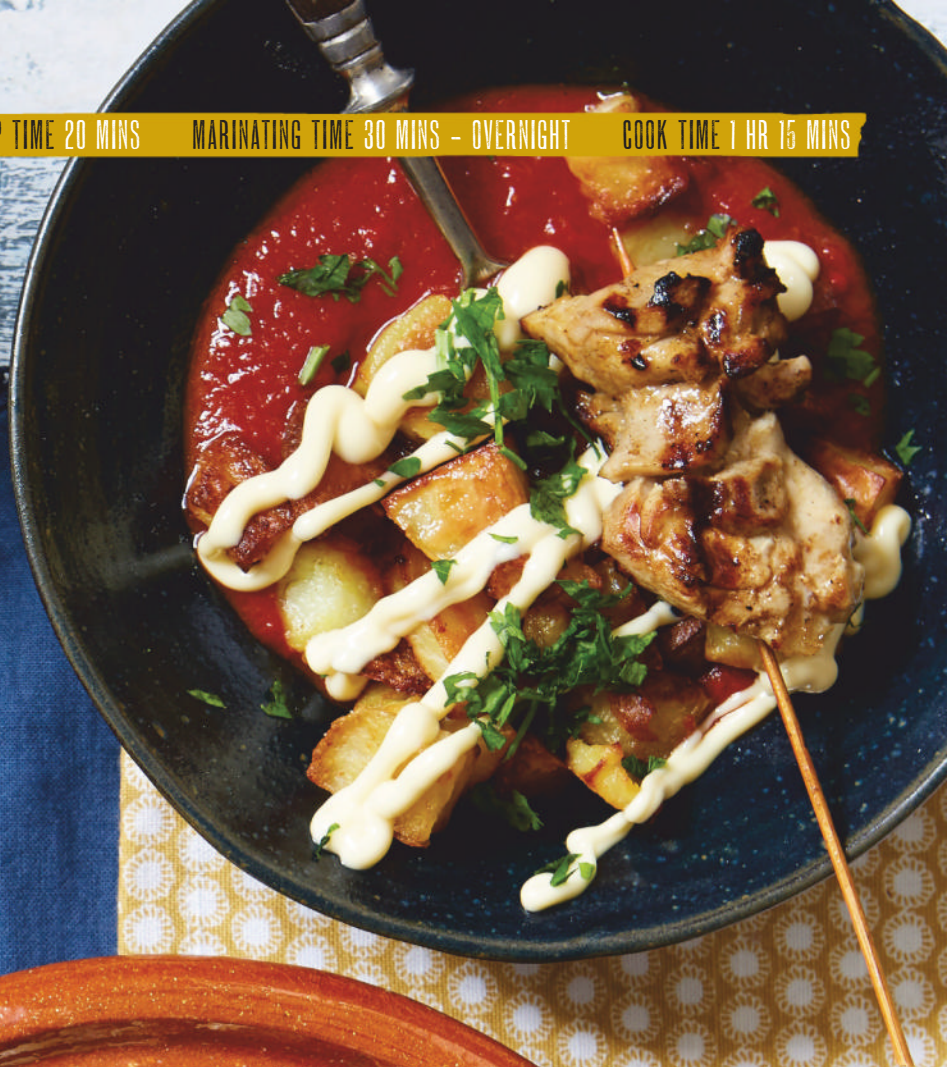


SERVINGS 8

PREP TIME 20 MINS

MARINATING TIME 30 MINS - OVERNIGHT

COOK TIME 1 HR 15 MINS





SERVINGS 10

PREP TIME 30 MINS

REST TIME 1 HR 20-50 MINS

COOK TIME 35 MINS

ARTY PEPPER FOCACCIA

LET THE DOUGH BE YOUR CANVAS AND TURN YOUR LOAF INTO
SOMETHING SPECIAL WITH THIS CREATIVE BAKE

231 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

17.6oz STRONG BREAD FLOUR

0.2oz SACHET FAST-ACTION DRIED YEAST,
OR 0.4oz FRESH YEAST

3TBSP OLIVE OIL, PLUS EXTRA FOR GREASING
AND TO SERVE

2TSP SEA SALT, PLUS EXTRA TO SERVE

FOR THE DECORATION:

A SELECTION OF VEG AND HERBS THAT CAN
BE EATEN RAW, SUCH AS:

RED ONION

PARSLEY

PEPPERS

SPRING ONIONS

OLIVES

CHILLIES

YOU WILL NEED:

LARGE BAKING TRAY, LINED WITH
BAKING PARCHMENT

STEP 1 Tip the flour into a bowl and stir in the yeast. Add 10floz | scant 1 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups lukewarm water, the olive oil and sea salt, then mix to form a dough. Knead the dough, either in a mixer with a dough hook, or on a lightly floured surface, for 8-10 mins until smooth and elastic.

STEP 2 Put the dough into an oiled bowl and cover the top with a little more oil. Cover the bowl with cling film and leave in a warm place to prove for 60-90 mins until doubled in size.

STEP 3 Roll or stretch the dough out to a 14x10" rectangle. Place on the baking tray and make deep dimples with your fingers over the dough.

STEP 4 Artfully arrange the vegetables and herbs close together, to create an attractive pattern. Press them into the dough a little and brush over olive oil. Leave in a warm place for 20 mins. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan) | 390°F | gas 6.

STEP 5 Bake the bread for 15 mins, then brush or drizzle over a little more olive oil. Return to the oven for 20 mins and bake until golden.

STEP 6 Drizzle the loaf with a little more olive oil, plus a scattering of sea salt. It's best served warm.

TIP

Cut the focaccia in half horizontally and fill with mozzarella, prosciutto, basil and sliced tomatoes for a Mediterranean-filled sandwich.

ZUCCHINI AND TOMATO GRATIN

THIS IS A PERFECT SUMMERY, MEDITERRANEAN BAKE –
DELICIOUS WITH CRUSTY BREAD AND A GLASS OF RED WINE

139 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

1 RED PEPPER
6 TOMATOES
2 TBSP OLIVE OIL
1 RED ONION, FINELY SLICED
2 GARLIC CLOVES, CRUSHED
1 TBSP MINT, CHOPPED
1 TBSP BASIL, CHOPPED
1 TBSP PARSLEY, CHOPPED
1-2 MEDIUM ZUCCHINIS
1.8oz CHEDDAR CHEESE, GRATED
(OPTIONAL)

STEP 1 Cut the red pepper in half and discard the core. Dice the pepper and 2 tomatoes. Heat 1tbsp oil in a pan and fry the sliced onion, crushed garlic and diced pepper until tender. Add the chopped tomato and most of the herbs, then cook for 5 mins until softened.

STEP 2 Spoon half this mixture into a shallow gratin/baking dish. Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan) | 355°F | gas 4.

STEP 3 Slice the zucchinis and the remaining tomatoes and toss into the gratin/baking dish. Sprinkle over seasoning and add the remaining pepper mixture, then drizzle with the remaining oil.

STEP 4 Bake for 20 mins until the vegetables are almost tender, then sprinkle with the cheese (if using) and the rest of the herbs. Cook for a further 5 mins until the cheese has melted.

SERVINGS 4 PREP TIME 20 MINS COOK TIME 30 MINS



SQUID SALAD WITH GARLIC AND CHILLI

MASTER THE SIMPLE ART OF COOKING SQUID AND THIS WILL
MAKE A TASTY STARTER WHEN ENTERTAINING GUESTS

335 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

28.2oz FRESH SQUID, SLICED INTO LARGE
PIECES

7TBSP OLIVE OIL

4 LARGE RED CHILLIES, SLICED

6 GARLIC CLOVES, SLICED

5.3oz ROCKET

2 LEMONS, JUICE ONLY

SEA SALT

STEP 1 Toss the squid in 2tbsp olive oil with plenty of black pepper. Set aside or you can leave it to marinate overnight in the fridge. Shallow-fry the chillies and garlic in another 2tbsp olive oil until just crispy. Drain on kitchen paper.

STEP 2 Grill the squid on a barbecue until charred on both sides. It literally takes a few mins. Put into a bowl with the remaining 1tbsp olive oil. Toss in the rocket, lemon juice and the chillies and garlic with plenty of sea salt, and serve immediately.

TIP

Don't be afraid of squid. Just cook it quickly on a super-hot barbecue or griddle pan and it won't be tough.



SERVINGS 4

PREP TIME 5-10 MINS

MARINATING TIME 1 HR - OVERNIGHT

COOK TIME 10 MINS





SPANAKOPITA

STUFFED WITH SPINACH AND FETA, THIS FLAKY PASTRY PIE WAS BORN TO BE CONSUMED ON THE STREETS OF ATHENS

276-230 CALORIES*

INGREDIENTS

4.2FL OZ | ½ CUP OLIVE OIL
1 ONION, FINELY CHOPPED
17.6 OZ FRESH SPINACH
2 GARLIC CLOVES
7 OZ FETA, CRUMBLed
1 HANDFUL FRESH PARSLEY, CHOPPED
2 BUNCHES FRESH DILL, CHOPPED (OR 2 TBSP DRIED DILL WEED)
1 HANDFUL FRESH MINT, CHOPPED (OR 2 TBSP DRIED MINT)
½ TSP NUTMEG
FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER
3 EGGS, BEATEN
1 ROLL STORE-BOUGHT FILO PASTRY (YOU WILL NEED 12 LEAVES), AT ROOM TEMPERATURE

STEP 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan) | 355°F | gas 4. Brush a 18x12" rectangular tin with a little olive oil.

STEP 2 Heat 1-2tbsp olive oil in a large pan or pot, and sauté the onion until it is browned and translucent.

STEP 3 Add the spinach and cook until it has wilted. Tip the onion and garlic into a large bowl, and add the feta, herbs, spices and black pepper. Mix together until everything is thoroughly combined.

STEP 4 Add the beaten eggs and 2tbsp olive oil to the spinach filling and mix well until everything is incorporated.

STEP 5 Take one filo sheet out of the packaging and carefully lay it at the bottom of your rectangular pan. Brush it with a little olive oil.

STEP 6 Repeat the previous step with 5 more filo sheets, to make 6 in total.

STEP 7 Spread the spinach and feta mixture evenly within the pan, being careful not to squash it down too much.

STEP 8 Lay a filo sheet on top of the spinach mixture and brush with olive oil. Repeat with 5 more filo sheets, until all your pastry sheets are used up.

STEP 9 Trim the excess filo pastry off and brush the top with olive oil. You can crumble the excess filo pastry and sprinkle it on top of the pie for an extra flaky crust.

STEP 10 Using a knife, score the pastry to mark out 10-12 slices of spanakopita. Be careful not to put the knife all the way through the pastry - only the first couple of layers.

STEP 11 Bake the spanakopita in the oven for about 1 hr, or until golden brown. Leave to cool for about 15 mins, then serve. Alternatively, serve at room temperature - but never cold!

VEGETARIAN BY NATURE, SPANAKOPITA HAS A VERY HERBY AROMA, AND POSSESSES A NATURAL SALTINESS FROM THE FETA CHEESE.

TIP

Lenten versions of this dish do not include the feta, making it vegan friendly. Alternatively, replace the feta cheese with tofu.



HUMMUS

A DISH SO DELICIOUSLY ICONIC, THE WORLD CONTINUES TO FIGHT OVER ITS ORIGINS

615 CALORIES

TIP

You can use tinned chickpeas instead – simply cook them according to their instructions, then start at step 5.

INGREDIENTS

14oz DRIED CHICKPEAS
1½ TSP BICARBONATE OF SODA
5 TBSP (HEAPED) TAHINI (GOOD QUALITY)
1 LEMON, JUICED
1 GARLIC CLOVE, CRUSHED
SEA SALT
EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL, TO GARNISH
PAPRIKA, TO GARNISH
FRESH PARSLEY, TO GARNISH
4 SMALL FLATBREADS, TOASTED, TO SERVE

STEP 1 Rinse the chickpeas and leave them in a bowl with twice the volume of cold water. Add 1tsp bicarbonate of soda, stir and leave to soak overnight.

STEP 2 Drain the chickpeas and rinse thoroughly under cold water.

STEP 3 Fill a large saucepan with cold water then add the chickpeas and ½tsp bicarbonate of soda. Place on a high heat and bring to the boil, then cover the saucepan and let simmer for about 1 hr. Check regularly and remove any white foam that forms on top of the water.

STEP 4 To check if the chickpeas are cooked, crush one between your fingers. If it crushes easily and feels smooth, then the chickpeas are ready. Once ready, stir vigorously to loosen the skins and skim away any that come off.

STEP 5 Drain the chickpeas and reserve some of the cooking water. Rinse them well.

STEP 6 Set a few chickpeas aside for a garnish. Place the rest in a food processor and blitz for 1 min. Add the tahini, lemon juice, garlic and salt, then blitz again. Stop to scrape down the sides, and continue blitzing until the mixture becomes creamy and smooth. If the mixture is too thick, add 1tbsp of the chickpea cooking water until the consistency is correct.

STEP 7 Transfer the hummus to a serving bowl, drizzle with extra virgin olive oil, sprinkle with a little paprika and chopped parsley, then top with whole chickpeas. Serve with some toasted flatbreads.

HUMMUS IS SO WIDELY ADORED THAT EVERYONE FROM THE GREEKS TO THE TURKS AND THE NORTH AFRICANS TO THE ARABS CLAIM IT AS THEIR OWN.

TIP

The parsley should only be washed in cold water and gently patted dry. Slice it carefully with a sharp knife so that it doesn't get bruised.



SERVINGS 4

PREP TIME 15 MINS

COOK TIME 30 MINS

TABBOULEH

NO LEBANESE FEAST IS COMPLETE WITHOUT THIS
ZINGY, PARSLEY-CENTRIC DISH

234 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

2.6oz FINE BULGUR WHEAT
4 BUNCHES FRESH FLAT-LEAF PARSLEY,
LEAVES ONLY, FINELY SLICED (SEE TIP)
1 BUNCH MINT, FINELY CHOPPED
3 MEDIUM TOMATOES, FINELY CHOPPED
1 MEDIUM ONION, FINELY CHOPPED
4.2FLOZ | 1/2 CUP FRESH LEMON JUICE
4TBSP EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL
SEA SALT AND FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER

STEP 1 Place the bulgur wheat in a bowl and cover with 1" of water. Let it sit for 30 mins, until it has doubled in size.

STEP 2 Add the parsley, mint, tomatoes and onion to a mixing bowl.

STEP 3 Drain the bulgur wheat when it is ready, gently squeezing out any remaining water, and add to the mixing bowl with the herbs and vegetables.

STEP 4 Add the lemon juice, olive oil, salt and pepper, then mix thoroughly. Adjust the seasoning to taste.

TABBOULEH IS POPULAR ACROSS THE MIDDLE EAST AND EUROPE, BUT FORMS AN INSEPARABLE PART OF LEBANESE CULTURE – THE GUEST OF HONOR AT EVERY FAMILY DINNER AND SPECIAL OCCASION.





SERVINGS 4

PREP TIME 15 MINS

COOK TIME 1 HR 15 MINS

SPANISH CHICKEN BAKE

PACKED FULL OF FLAVOR, THIS MOUTH-WATERING DISH
IS WONDERFULLY SIMPLE TO MAKE

375 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

8.8oz CHERRY TOMATOES
2 SHALLOTS, SLICED INTO WEDGES
2 RED PEPPERS, ROUGHLY CHOPPED
8 CHICKEN THIGHS
1 BUNCH EACH OF THYME AND OREGANO
2Tbsp SWEET SMOKED PAPRIKA
4Tbsp OLIVE OIL
1 GLASS WHITE WINE
6 GARLIC CLOVES, UNPEELED
3.5oz PITTED GREEN OLIVES
CRUSTY BREAD, TO SERVE

STEP 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan) | 355°F | gas 4. Toss the tomatoes, shallots, peppers, chicken, thyme and oregano with the paprika and olive oil in a large roasting tin.

STEP 2 Pour over the wine and roast for 45 mins. Add the garlic and cook for another 30 mins until the chicken is cooked through. Top with olives and serve with bread.



SERVINGS 8

PREP TIME 5-10 MINS

REST TIME 1 HR

COOK TIME 15 MINS

WHITE BEAN & TOMATO SALAD

THIS EGYPTIAN DISH IS A DELICIOUS WAY
TO ENJOY PROTEIN-PACKED BEANS

132 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

3TBSP OLIVE OIL
2 LARGE ONIONS, SLICED
2 GARLIC CLOVES, CRUSHED
2.5oz TOMATO PURÉE
1 LEMON, JUICE ONLY
23.3oz TINNED HARICOT BEANS, DRAINED
AND RINSED (SEE TIP)
8.8oz CHERRY TOMATOES, QUARTERED
5TBSP CHOPPED FLAT-LEAF PARSLEY
1TBSP ZA'ATAR

STEP 1 Heat 1tbsp oil in a pan. Gently cook the onions for 10 mins then add the garlic and stir through for a few mins. Add 5floz | scant $\frac{2}{3}$ cup water and the tomato purée. Stir well then put into a bowl, covered, to cool completely.

STEP 2 Stir the remaining olive oil and the lemon juice into the onions together with the beans. Add the tomatoes and parsley. Check the seasoning and adjust to taste, then sprinkle over the za'atar.

TIP

You can alternatively use dried beans prepared as per the packet instructions, or follow steps 1-5 on page 50, simmering until tender.



SERVINGS 8

PREP TIME 15-20 MINS

COOK TIME 20 MINS

STUFFED MACKEREL

THIS IS A SIMPLE AND TASTY WAY TO ENJOY OILY FISH, WHICH ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

352 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

3.5oz FRESH BREADCRUMBS
1.4oz DRIED APRICOTS, ROUGHLY CHOPPED
2TBSP TOASTED PINE NUTS
2 LEMONS, 1 ZESTED AND JUICED, ½ SLICED
AND ½ CUT INTO WEDGES TO SERVE
3TBSP FLAT-LEAF PARSLEY, CHOPPED
4TBSP OLIVE OIL
2 WHOLE MACKEREL, GUTTED

STEP 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan) | 390°F | gas 6. Combine the breadcrumbs, apricots, pine nuts, lemon zest and juice, parsley and half the oil with plenty of seasoning.

STEP 2 Open up the mackerel, stuff the mixture inside and drizzle the remaining oil on the outside, with plenty of seasoning. Spread a few lemon slices over the top of the fish and tuck a few into the cavity.

STEP 3 Put the fish on a baking tray and cook for 20 mins, until just cooked through.

STEP 4 To serve, place the fish on a platter with lemon wedges.

TIP

Leaving the fish whole and serving on a platter like this makes a great impact when you're entertaining.

MOUSSAKA

RICH LAYERS OF VEGETABLES, MEAT AND CREAMY WHITE SAUCE
MAKE UP GREECE'S BEST-LOVED DISH

660 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

OLIVE OIL, FOR FRYING
SEA SALT AND FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER

FOR THE FIRST LAYER:

3 AUBERGINES, SLICED INTO ROUNDS
2 ZUCCHINIS, SLICED INTO ROUNDS
3 FLOURY, SMALL POTATOES, PEELED AND
SLICED INTO THIN ROUNDS

FOR THE MEAT SAUCE:

1 RED ONION, CHOPPED
2 GARLIC CLOVES, MINCED
1 TSP THYME
1 TSP SUGAR
17.6oz LAMB MINCE
2 TBSP TOMATO PURÉE
1 GLASS RED WINE (OPTIONAL)
14oz TIN CHOPPED TOMATOES

1/2 TSP NUTMEG
1 TSP GROUND CINNAMON
1 BAY LEAF

FOR THE WHITE SAUCE:

4 FL OZ | 1/2 CUP OLIVE OIL
3oz PLAIN FLOUR
30.4 FL OZ | 1 3/4 CUPS MILK
2 EGG YOLKS
1/2 TSP NUTMEG
5.3oz KEFALOTYRI OR GRAVIERA CHEESE (OR
PARMESAN IF NOT AVAILABLE)

FOR THE TOPPING:

1 HANDFUL GRATED KEFALOTYRI OR
GRAVIERA CHEESE
1/2-1 TSP DRIED MIXED HERBS (OPTIONAL)
1 LARGE TOMATO, SLICED INTO ROUNDS

STEP 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan) | 350°F | gas 4. Heat 1-2tbsp of oil in a frying pan over a high heat and fry the aubergine and zucchini slices until soft. Drain on some kitchen paper.

STEP 2 To start the meat sauce, warm another 1-2tbsp of oil in a deep saucepan over a medium heat. Fry the onion until soft. Add the garlic and cook for another 2 mins, before adding the thyme and sugar, then fry until everything has caramelised.

STEP 3 Add the lamb mince and tomato purée. Break up any big chunks of mince, and cook until golden brown. Add the red wine (if using) and cook for another 5 mins.

STEP 4 Add the tomatoes, spices and bay leaf, and season well. Bring to the boil and simmer for 15-20 mins, stirring often. Remove the bay leaf once it's done.

STEP 5 While the meat sauce is cooking, make up the white sauce. Warm the olive oil in a clean saucepan over a medium heat. Add the flour, whisking constantly to make a smooth paste.

STEP 6 Gradually add the milk while whisking to stop any lumps forming. Keep stirring until the sauce thickens – this can take around 5-10 mins. Once thickened, stir in the egg yolks, salt, pepper, nutmeg and cheese. Keep whisking to ensure the eggs don't scramble.

STEP 7 To assemble: drizzle some olive oil on the bottom of a large rectangular baking dish. Cover the base with the sliced potatoes, then add a layer of aubergines and zucchinis – using about half of them. Pour over the meat ragu and spread it evenly. Layer the remaining aubergines and zucchinis on top, then cover with the white sauce. Sprinkle over the grated cheese and herbs (if using), and arrange the sliced tomatoes across the top.

STEP 8 Bake in the middle shelf of the oven for about 45 mins to 1 hr, or until the cheese turns golden-brown. Allow the moussaka to cool for at least 20 mins before serving so the dish can set slightly.

TIP

To make a vegetarian version of this dish, replace the meat with finely chopped vegetables, mushrooms and/or lentils.

SERVINGS 8

PREP TIME 45 MINS

COOK TIME 45 MINS - 1 HR





MEDITERRANEAN LAMB WITH FETA STUFFING

THE FETA CONTRASTS PERFECTLY WITH THE RICHNESS OF THE LAMB
AND GIVES IT A PLEASANT SALTINESS

425 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

7oz FETA CHEESE

4-5 SPRIGS OREGANO, LEAVES ONLY,
ROUGHLY CHOPPED

1.8oz PITTED BLACK OLIVES IN OIL, DRAINED
AND CHOPPED

1.8oz SUN-DRIED TOMATOES, CHOPPED

1.2oz PINE NUTS

FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER

1 LEG OF LAMB, AROUND 4-4.4LB,
BUTTERFLIED

YOU WILL NEED:

BUTCHER'S STRING

A LARGE ROASTING TIN, LINED WITH FOIL

STEP 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan) | 355°F | gas 4. Roughly chop the feta, then put in a bowl with the oregano, olives, tomatoes and pine nuts. Season with pepper (but no salt – the feta will be salty enough). Mix it all together well, then open out the lamb, skin side down, and stuff the mixture into the cuts and opening. Use your hands and push it in really well.

STEP 2 String up the lamb. You may find it easier to cut several pieces of butcher's string at intervals and just knot them to secure the stuffing. Weigh the lamb to calculate the cooking time. Put in the roasting tin and roast for 18 mins per lb, plus an extra 20 mins. This will give you just-pink lamb.

TIP

You can buy ready boned-out lamb legs but they are often quite small, so it's worth ordering one from your butcher to have one of this size to serve 8.

SERVE WITH NEW POTATOES DRIZZLED WITH OLIVE OIL, PLUS GREEN BEANS, BROAD BEANS AND PEAS. STEAM THE POTATOES AND GREEN VEG UNTIL TENDER. THIS DISH DOESN'T NEED ANY GRAVY, BUT A DRIZZLE OF POMEGRANATE MOLASSES WOULD WORK WELL.



SERVINGS 4

PREP TIME 20-25 MINS

COOK TIME 30 MINS

SUMMER RATATOUILLE

FRESH TOMATOES AND GENEROUS QUANTITIES OF FRAGRANT HERBS
MAKE THIS RATATOUILLE VIBRANT AND SUMMERY

200 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

1 SMALL HEAD OF CELERY, ROUGHLY
CHOPPED
3 RED PEPPERS, ROUGHLY CHOPPED
2 ONIONS, ROUGHLY CHOPPED
1 SMALL FENNEL BULB, ROUGHLY CHOPPED
3TBSP OLIVE OIL
2 ZUCCHINIS, ROUGHLY CHOPPED
A FEW SPRIGS OF FRESH THYME
3 GARLIC CLOVES, THINLY SLICED
½ TBSP CASTER SUGAR
4.5oz PITTED BLACK OLIVES
9.5oz CHERRY TOMATOES, QUARTERED
1 HANDFUL EACH OF BASIL AND FLAT-LEAF
PARSLEY, LEAVES ONLY

STEP 1 Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan) | 355°F | gas 4. Toss the celery, red peppers, onions and fennel in 2tbsp olive oil on a baking tray. Roast for 10 mins, until just soft. Add the zucchinis and thyme, tossing to coat in the olive oil, and roast for another 10 mins. Remove from the oven and set aside.

STEP 2 Heat the remaining 1tbsp olive oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat. Fry the garlic until just golden. Add the roasted vegetables, sugar, olives and cherry tomatoes. Cook over a medium heat for a further few mins, until the tomatoes are warmed through but still holding their shape. Remove from the heat, scatter with the parsley and basil, and serve.

TIP

Any leftovers can be used to make a super-speedy stuffed pepper snack – see page 22.



CHICKEN STUFFED WITH BASIL

THIS IS AN EASY DISH AND A GREAT WAY TO JAZZ UP CHICKEN,
PERFECT IF YOU HAVE A BIG POT OF BASIL IN THE YARD

614 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

4 CHICKEN SUPREMES
3TBSP OLIVE OIL
12.3oz BABY LEEKS, TRIMMED AND SLICED
4TBSP CRÈME FRAÎCHE
SEA SALT AND FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER

FOR THE BASIL PURÉE:

3 GARLIC CLOVES, BASHED
2 HANDFULS OF FRESH BASIL
5FLOZ | SCANT 2/3 CUP EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

YOU WILL NEED:

COCKTAIL STICKS

STEP 1 First, make the basil purée. Use a blender to whizz the ingredients together (including the basil stalks) with a good pinch of sea salt.

STEP 2 Preheat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan) | 390°F | gas 6. Carefully pull back the chicken skin without removing it. Make an incision in the center thick part and spoon in some purée. Put back the skin and secure the end with a cocktail stick. Do this for all 4 pieces (you can do this ahead and leave them in the fridge overnight).

STEP 3 Put the chicken on an oiled baking tray, rub the skin with a little of the oil and sprinkle with sea salt and black pepper. Roast in the oven for about 20 mins or until cooked through.

STEP 4 While the chicken cooks, prepare the leeks. Heat the oil in a sauté pan and cook them for about 10-15 mins or until just softened. Add the crème fraîche and 3tbsp of the basil purée. Serve with the chicken with potatoes or crusty bread.

TIP

The basil purée will keep for a week in the fridge, and it's delicious added to a soup or to pasta.

TIMBALLO SICILIANO

THIS SHOWSTOPPER TAKES ITS NAME FROM THE OLD FRENCH WORD FOR KETTLEDRUM – IT'S ESSENTIALLY A PIE MADE OF PASTA

559 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE TOMATO SAUCE:

2TBSP OLIVE OIL
2 GARLIC CLOVES, CRUSHED
SMALL BUNCH BASIL (RESERVE A FEW LEAVES FOR DECORATION)
4x 14oz TINS CHOPPED TOMATOES
1TSP CASTER SUGAR
SEA SALT AND FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER

FOR THE PASTA:

17.6oz ANELLINI HOOP PASTA, MACARONI OR RIGATONI
6TBSP OLIVE OIL
3.5oz PARMESAN, FINELY GRATED

FOR THE FILLING:

OLIVE OIL, FOR FRYING
4 AUBERGINES, 1 SLICED LENGTHWAYS, 3 CHOPPED INTO CUBES
3.5oz PARMESAN, FINELY GRATED

YOU WILL NEED:

8" ROUND CAKE TIN, LIGHTLY GREASED WITH OLIVE OIL

STEP 1 Make the tomato sauce by heating the oil in a pan with the garlic for a few mins. Add the basil and cook for 30 secs, then add the tomatoes and sugar. Season and simmer for 25 mins, or until reduced by half. Remove from the heat.

STEP 2 Bring a separate pan of water to the boil and cook the pasta for 10-12 mins, until al dente. Drain, return to the pan, add the olive oil and Parmesan, and stir in half of the tomato sauce.

STEP 3 For the filling, in a frying pan, heat 0.75" oil and fry the aubergine slices (for the top of your timballo) and the cubed aubergine until golden. Add the cubed aubergine to the remaining tomato sauce and cook for 15 mins until reduced. Stir in the cheese.

STEP 4 Preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan) | 355°F | gas 4. To assemble, line the base of the tin with the aubergine slices. Add three-quarters of the pasta, making sure it lines the base and sides, leaving a gap in the center to scoop in the aubergine and tomato sauce mix, then place the remaining pasta on top.

STEP 5 Bake for 20-25 mins, leave to stand for 10 mins, then turn out onto a platter. Top with a few basil leaves before serving.

TIP

We have used authentic Sicilian hoops here, but any large macaroni will work for this recipe.

SERVINGS 8

PREP TIME 15-20 MINS

REST TIME 10 MINS

COOK TIME 1 HR 25 MINS





FISHERMAN'S SEA BREAM WITH AIOLI

YOU CAN ALSO USE SEA BASS FOR THIS EASY RECIPE

676 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

2TBSP OLIVE OIL
1 SMALL BULB FENNEL, CHOPPED
5.3oz BROWN CAP MUSHROOMS,
THICKLY SLICED
7oz SMALL TOMATOES, HALVED
PINCH OF SAFFRON THREADS
5FLOZ | SCANT 2/3 CUPS DRY WHITE WINE
1 SEA BREAM, APPROXIMATELY 26.5-28.2oz,
SCALED AND GUTTED
5 FRESH BAY LEAVES
A FEW SPRIGS OF FRESH THYME
SEA SALT AND FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER

FOR THE AIOLI:

3 GARLIC CLOVES, CRUSHED
1 LEMON, JUICE ONLY
2 EGG YOLKS
8.5FLOZ | 1 CUP OLIVE OIL

STEP 1 Start by making the aioli. Mix together the garlic, lemon and egg yolks with a good pinch of salt. Gradually whisk in the oil and keep whisking (an electric hand whisk is best) until thickened. Check for seasoning - it should be garlicky, but you may want to add more salt or lemon. Set aside, covered in the fridge.

STEP 2 Preheat the oven to 220°C (200°C fan) | 430°F | gas 7. Gently warm the olive oil in a sauté pan and cook the fennel for 10 mins until slightly softened. Add the mushrooms and cook for a few mins. Put into a shallow roasting tin, and add the tomatoes, saffron and white wine. Season well. Stuff the cavity of the bream with the bay leaves.

STEP 3 Put the bream on top of the tomato mixture then bake in the oven for about 15 mins or until the fish is cooked through. Serve the aioli on the side. This is delicious served with new potatoes.

TIP

The aioli makes more than you will need for this recipe, but it will keep for 5 days if stored in a sealed jar in the fridge.



ZUCCHINI AND AUBERGINE LASAGNE

A FABULOUS ALTERNATIVE TO THE MEAT VERSION,
THIS RICH DISH WILL TAKE YOU STRAIGHT TO THE MEDITERRANEAN

826 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE TOMATO SAUCE:

4TBSP OLIVE OIL, PLUS EXTRA FOR FRYING
2 SMALL RED ONIONS, DICED
4 GARLIC CLOVES, SLICED
2x 17.6oz CARTONS PASSATA
2TBSP TOMATO PURÉE
2TBSP SHERRY VINEGAR
2TSP CASTER SUGAR
1 VEGETABLE STOCK CUBE

FOR THE FILLING:

4 ZUCCHINIS, CUT INTO 0.2" THICK STRIPS
1 AUBERGINE, CUT INTO 0.2" THICK STRIPS
14oz BALL MOZZARELLA

FOR THE WHITE SAUCE:

4TBSP OLIVE OIL
1.5oz PLAIN FLOUR
1TSP NUTMEG
17FLOZ | 2 CUPS MILK

FOR THE TOPPING:

40G | 1.4oz PARMESAN, GRATED

STEP 1 For the tomato sauce, heat the oil in a pan, add the onions and cook for 5 mins over a medium heat. Add the garlic for a further 2 mins. Mix in the rest of the ingredients, bring to the boil, then turn down the heat to a gentle simmer for 40 mins, allowing the sauce to reduce.

STEP 2 While the tomato sauce cooks, preheat the oven to 180°C (160°C fan) | 355°F | gas 4. For the filling, brush a tiny amount of oil over a griddle pan and, in batches, cook the sliced vegetables for about 2 mins on each side until marked with chargrill stripes.

STEP 3 For the white sauce, warm the oil in a pan then add the flour and nutmeg, and whisk to a smooth paste. Add a little of the milk whisking until smooth. Whisk in the remaining milk and bring to the boil, whisking continuously, until thick.

THE TOMATO SAUCE CAN BE BULKED UP WITH A DRAINED JAR OF TUNA.

STEP 4 Layer a third of the tomato sauce into an ovenproof dish, followed by a layer of vegetables, half of the mozzarella then half of the white sauce. Repeat and layer the remaining tomato sauce and vegetables.

STEP 5 Bake for 30 mins then add one last layer of aubergine, sprinkle on Parmesan and cook for 10 mins more.

TIP

If you don't have a griddle pan, use a frying pan to cook the vegetables instead.



SERVINGS 6

PREP TIME 10 MINS

MARINATING TIME 3 HRS - OVERNIGHT

COOK TIME 20 MINS

PORTUGUESE-STYLE BEEF SKEWERS WITH FRENCH BEANS

THE HERBY 'SAUCE' IN THIS RECIPE WORKS WELL WITH ANY GRILL

506 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

2.6LB PIECE RUMP OR TOP RUMP
CRUSTY BREAD, TO SERVE

FOR THE MARINADE:

2TBSP SMOKED PAPRIKA
1TSP CAYENNE PEPPER
1TBSP CUMIN
1TBSP DRIED OREGANO
2TBSP OLIVE OIL
3TBSP RED WINE VINEGAR
3TBSP BROWN SUGAR

FOR THE SAUCE:

6TBSP FLAT-LEAF PARSLEY, ROUGHLY
CHOPPED
2TBSP FRESH OREGANO, LEAVES ONLY
4TBSP EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL
1 LEMON, JUICE ONLY

FOR THE BEANS:

10.5oz FRENCH BEANS, TRIMMED
1TBSP DIJON MUSTARD
2TBSP RED WINE VINEGAR
3.4FLOZ | SCANT 1/2 CUP EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

YOU WILL NEED:

METAL SKEWERS

STEP 1 Cut the beef into large chunks, trimming off any sinew. Mix together the marinade ingredients and add the beef, coating the meat thoroughly. Put into a bowl and leave to marinate in the fridge for at least 3 hrs or overnight.

STEP 2 Once marinated, thread the meat onto metal skewers. To make the sauce, simply whizz the ingredients together in a food processor. Cover and set aside.

STEP 3 Cook the beans until just tender, about 8 mins, then drain. Whisk the mustard and vinegar together then gradually whisk in the oil. Toss the vinaigrette into the warm beans.

STEP 4 Grill the skewers under the grill or on the barbecue for a few mins each side, until cooked to your liking. Spoon over the herb sauce and serve with the beans and plenty of crusty bread.

TIP

These skewers would be just as tasty with lamb or pork, but if limiting your red meat intake they would also be great with chicken, tuna or tofu.





SERVINGS 6-8

PREP TIME 10-15 MINS

REST TIME 10 MINS

TOMATO AND COUSCOUS SALAD

THIS DELICIOUS SALAD CONTAINS FEW INGREDIENTS, BUT IT'S ALL ABOUT THE RIPENESS OF THE TOMATOES AND THE QUALITY OF THE OLIVE OIL

311-233 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

8.8oz TOASTED COUSCOUS OR GIANT (ISRAELI) COUSCOUS

2 LEMONS, ZESTED AND JUICED

8TBSP EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL

17.6oz CHERRY TOMATOES, HALVED

1 LARGE BUNCH FLAT-LEAF PARSLEY, FINELY CHOPPED

SEA SALT AND FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER

STEP 1 Put the couscous in a large bowl. Pour over boiling water to come about 0.75" above the surface. Cover with clingfilm and leave to stand for 10 mins or until tender. Put into a colander and run under cold water. Put back into the bowl and add the lemon zest and juice, and the olive oil. Add plenty of seasoning.

STEP 2 Make sure your tomatoes are at room temperature (see tip). Stir them into the couscous with the chopped parsley and serve immediately.

TIP

Raw tomatoes are best enjoyed at room temperature. When they are cold from the fridge, it deadens their flavour.



PROVENCAL FISH TRAYBAKE

MEDITERRANEAN FLAVORS GO WELL WITH FISH –
IT'S SUMMER ON A PLATE!

441 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

1.3LB NEW POTATOES
1 LARGE AUBERGINE, SLICED 0.2" THICK
LENGTHWAYS
5.9FLOZ | SCANT ¾ CUP WHITE WINE
3 SHALLOTS, SLICED
8.8OZ CHERRY TOMATOES, HALVED
2.8OZ PITTED BLACK OLIVES
2TBSP OLIVE OIL
SEA SALT AND FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER
A FEW SPRIGS OREGANO, FINELY CHOPPED
3TBSP SUNDRIED TOMATO PESTO
4x 5.3OZ THICK WHITE FISH FILLETS (SUCH
AS COLEY), SKINNED AND BONED

STEP 1 Boil the potatoes until just tender, cool slightly and halve. Griddle or grill the aubergine for 2-3 mins each side until soft. Boil the wine for 2 mins until it has reduced by about a third.

STEP 2 Preheat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan) | 390°F | gas 6. Arrange the shallots, tomatoes, olives and potatoes in a large roasting tin and drizzle with the oil and wine. Season well with salt and pepper and scatter over half the oregano.

STEP 3 Spread the pesto onto one side of each fish fillet, scatter with the remaining oregano, then wrap each with a quarter of the aubergine slices and arrange in the roasting tin. Bake for 15-20 mins.

MEDITERRANEAN VEGETABLE CALZONE

AN IRRESISTIBLE CROSS BETWEEN A PIZZA AND A CORNISH PASTY!
THIS HEARTY DISH MAKES THE PERFECT COMFORT FOOD

1,141-570 CALORIES*

INGREDIENTS

26.5oz FROZEN MEDITERRANEAN
VEGETABLES

2 GARLIC CLOVES, CRUSHED

3Tbsp OLIVE OIL

2Tbsp SUN-DRIED TOMATO PASTE

SEA SALT AND FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER

19.8oz CHILLED PIZZA DOUGH, DIVIDED IN
HALF AND ROLLED OUT INTO TWO ROUNDS

5.3oz MOZZARELLA CHEESE, DRAINED AND
TORN INTO PIECES (OPTIONAL)

ROCKET LEAVES, TO SERVE

EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL, TO SERVE

STEP 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan) | 390°F | gas 6. Tip the frozen vegetables into a large roasting tray, spreading them out evenly. Scatter with garlic, drizzle with 1tbsp of the olive oil and roast for 25-30 mins, or until tender.

STEP 2 Mix the tomato paste and remaining oil together, add to the cooked vegetables and toss to coat. Season with salt and freshly ground pepper. Cool slightly.

STEP 3 Increase the oven to 220°C (200°C fan) | 430°F | gas 7. Spread half the vegetables over one half of each dough round, and brush the edges with water.

STEP 4 Top with pieces of mozzarella (if using) then fold each dough round in half and twist the edges to seal. Place on a baking tray and bake for 20 mins, until the dough is crisp.

STEP 5 If you are serving 4, slice each calzone in half. Serve with a simple salad of rocket leaves drizzled with some extra virgin olive oil.

TIP

We've suggested using ready-made pizza dough here, but you can always make your own if you have time.

SERVINGS 2-4 PREP TIME 15-20 MINS COOK TIME 45-50 MINS





SERVINGS 6-8

PREP TIME 10-15 MINS

COOK TIME 50 MINS - 1 HR

CATALAN FISH STEW

THIS ONE IS REALLY SIMPLE. YOU CAN MIX AND MATCH THE FISH
AND IT'S ALL IN ONE POT – FABULOUS!

334-250 CALORIES*

INGREDIENTS

2TBSP OLIVE OIL
3 ONIONS, CHOPPED
1 LARGE BULB FENNEL, CHOPPED (RESERVE
THE FRONDS TO GARNISH)
2 GARLIC CLOVES, CRUSHED
1 PINCH CHILLI FLAKES
14oz TIN CHOPPED TOMATOES
2TSP FENNEL SEEDS
2 BAY LEAVES
25.4FLOZ | SCANT 3¼ CUPS FISH STOCK
8.5FLOZ | 1 CUP WHITE WINE
17.6oz NEW POTATOES, UNPEELED AND
THICKLY SLICED
2.2LB WHITE FISH, SUCH AS MONKFISH OR
HAKE, CUT INTO CHUNKS
10.5oz LARGE PRAWNS
SEA SALT AND FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER

STEP 1 Heat the olive oil a large pan then gently sweat the onions and fennel together for 20 mins. Add the garlic and cook for a few mins, then add the chilli, tomatoes, fennel seeds, bay, fish stock and white wine. Bring to the boil then add the potatoes and turn down to a simmer for about 20 mins or until the potatoes are tender.

STEP 2 Add the fish and prawns, season well and simmer for 5 mins or so until the fish is cooked. Scatter over the chopped fennel fronds and serve.

TIP

Once you've made the base sauce, you can add your favourite fish. Try squid, mussels and lobster tails.



SERVINGS 4

PREP TIME 10 MINS

COOK TIME 30 MINS

SALMON & SPAGHETTI BOLOGNESE

PACKED FULL OF HEALTHY OMEGA 3,
THIS DISH IS JUST AS TASTY AS IT IS HEALTHY

445 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

8.8oz SALMON FILLET, SLICED
SEA SALT AND FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER
1 LEMON, ZESTED AND JUICED
2TBSP OLIVE OIL
1x 1oz CONCENTRATED VEGETABLE STOCK
(SUCH AS KNORR STOCK POT)
8.8oz SPAGHETTI
5.3oz TENDERSTEM BROCCOLI
1 ONION, CHOPPED
2 GARLIC CLOVES, CRUSHED
1 RED PEPPER, DESEEDED AND CHOPPED
7oz PASSATA

STEP 1 Preheat the oven to 200°C (180°C fan) | 390°F | gas 6. Put the salmon on a non-stick baking tray. Season generously with salt and freshly ground black pepper and sprinkle over lemon zest and juice, and 1tsp olive oil. Bake for 10 mins.

STEP 2 Meanwhile, add the concentrated vegetable stock to a pan of water, bring to the boil, add the spaghetti and cook for 10 mins. Add the broccoli for the final 3 mins of cooking time.

STEP 3 Heat the remaining oil in a frying pan, add the onion, garlic and pepper, and simmer gently for 5 mins. Add the passata and simmer for a few mins.

STEP 4 Drain the pasta and broccoli, and combine with the sauce. Serve topped with the salmon.

TIP

This recipe also works with fresh tuna steaks instead of salmon. For thicker steaks you may have to bake for a few mins longer at step 1.

PAELLA

THIS DELICIOUS BLEND OF CHICKEN, CHORIZO AND SEAFOOD
IN AROMATIC RICE IS A MODERN TWIST ON A SPANISH CLASSIC

613 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

2TBSP OLIVE OIL
4 SKINLESS, BONELESS CHICKEN THIGHS
SEA SALT AND FRESHLY GROUND PEPPER
2.6oz CHORIZO, ROUGHLY SLICED
1 ONION, DICED
2 GARLIC CLOVES, DICED
2 TOMATOES, ROUGHLY CHOPPED
1TBSP SMOKED PAPRIKA
A LARGE PINCH OF SAFFRON (SEE TIP)
10.5oz PAELLA RICE (ALTERNATIVELY USE
ARBORIO RICE)
2.5 PINTS | 5 CUPS STOCK (CHICKEN, SEAFOOD
OR VEGETABLE)
3.5oz FROZEN PEAS
6 KING PRAWNS
8 MUSSELS
LEMON WEDGES, TO SERVE

STEP 1 Set your hob to a medium temperature and heat your oil in a large frying pan. While the oil heats, season the chicken thighs well with salt and pepper. Add them to the pan, frying until they are lightly browned all over.

STEP 2 Add the chorizo and continue frying for another 1-2 mins until it releases its oils. Remove the chicken and chorizo, and set aside, leaving the juices in the pan.

STEP 3 Add the diced onion to the saucepan and fry until it becomes soft and semi-translucent. Then add the garlic, chopped tomatoes, paprika and saffron, and cook for a couple of mins.

STEP 4 Return the chicken and chorizo to the saucepan, including any juices that have been released. Add the rice to the dish and allow that to fry for 1-2 mins.

STEP 5 Pour in the stock and give your dish a quick stir to ensure that all of the rice is covered with stock. Check the cooking time of your rice on its packaging, and leave to simmer on a low heat, without stirring.

STEP 6 Once your rice is about done, add your peas, prawns and mussels to the dish. If you want to, place a lid on top of the pan to allow the seafood to steam.

STEP 7 Once the prawns have turned pink and the mussels have opened (pick out and discard any that remain closed), you should be ready to serve. Garnish the paella with a few lemon wedges and enjoy.

TIP

To extract the true flavor of saffron, soak the strands in a little hot (but not boiling) water for around 10 mins until aromatic.

TRADITIONAL PAELLAS ARE COOKED IN A SPECIALISED PAELLA PAN, BUT A LARGE, DEEP FRYING PAN SHOULD SUFFICE.

SERVINGS 4

PREP TIME 10 MINS

COOK TIME 45 MINS





SERVINGS 4

PREP TIME 5-10 MINS

CHILL TIME 30 MINS

COOK TIME 10-15 MINS

CHURROS WITH SALTED CARAMEL AFFOGATO

THESE SPANISH DOUGHNUTS ARE PERFECT WITH AFFOGATO, AN ITALIAN DESSERT OF ICE CREAM WITH A HOT ESPRESSO COFFEE POURED OVER IT

526 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

1TBSP OLIVE OIL, PLUS PLENTY MORE FOR DEEP FRYING

1TSP VANILLA EXTRACT

8.8oz PLAIN FLOUR, SIFTED

1TBSP BAKING POWDER

1TSP GROUND CINNAMON

2TBSP CASTER SUGAR

4 SCOOPS SALTED CARAMEL ICE CREAM

4 CUPS HOT STRONG COFFEE, TO SERVE

YOU WILL NEED:

PIPING BAG WITH 0.4" STAR-SHAPED NOZZLE

STEP 1 For the churros, bring 6.8floz | $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water to the boil in a large saucepan with the 1tbsp olive oil and vanilla. Add the flour and baking powder and stir well until you have a thick paste. Remove from the heat and leave to cool.

STEP 2 Put the dough in a piping bag and chill in the freezer for 30 mins. Pour the olive oil into a deep-fat fryer or heavy-based saucepan to a depth of 4". Heat the oil to 160°C | 320°F (use a sugar thermometer or drop a cube of bread into the oil - when it turns golden within 1 min, it's the right temperature).

STEP 3 Very carefully pipe 4" lengths of the dough into the oil, using scissors to snip off the ends. Fry the churros for 3-4 mins, turning if necessary, until golden. Remove from the oil with a slotted spoon and drain on kitchen paper.

STEP 4 Mix the cinnamon and sugar, then dust over the churros while still warm. Spoon ice cream into glass coffee cups. Pour over the coffee and serve immediately with a few churros.

TIP

If the churros are losing their shape, return the dough to the freezer for another 10 mins.

PASTÉIS DE NATA

TAKE YOUR TEA OR COFFEE WITH ONE OF THESE BITE-SIZED PORTUGUESE TREATS, THE ORIGINAL CUSTARD TART

285-214 CALORIES PER TART

INGREDIENTS

24.7oz READY-ROLLED PUFF PASTRY
OLIVE OIL, FOR BRUSHING AND GREASING
4-5TBSP ICING SUGAR, FOR DUSTING
1/2-1TBSP GROUND CINNAMON (OPTIONAL)

FOR THE CUSTARD:

16FLOZ | 2 CUPS DOUBLE CREAM
12.2FLOZ | 1 1/2 CUPS WHOLE MILK
1 VANILLA POD, SEEDS SCRAPED (OR 2TSP VANILLA EXTRACT)
4TBSP CORNFLOUR, SIFTED
8oz CASTER SUGAR
2 LARGE EGGS
4 LARGE EGG YOLKS

YOU WILL NEED:

A MUFFIN OR CUPCAKE TIN, WITH THE WELLS GREASED (IDEALLY MULTIPLE TINS TO BAKE 30-40 PASTRIES AT ONCE)

STEP 1 Start by preparing the custard. In a large saucepan over a medium heat, add the cream, milk, and vanilla pod and seeds. Cook for 10 mins, stirring frequently. Take off the heat to cool slightly.

STEP 2 In a large bowl, sift together the cornflour and sugar. Whisk the eggs and egg yolks into this mixture to form a paste. Add 3 1/2floz | 1/2 cup of the hot milk mix to the egg mix, whisking constantly so the eggs don't scramble.

STEP 3 Pour the egg mixture into the saucepan with the rest of the milk, and return to the heat for another 10 mins or so. Keep whisking as the cornflour thickens the custard; it should be thick but pourable. Pass the custard through a sieve, place into a glass bowl, and cover with clingfilm (with the wrap in contact with the custard). Refrigerate overnight.

STEP 4 Preheat the oven to 250°C (230°C fan) | 480°F | gas 9. Unroll the pastry from its packaging and brush the top with a little olive oil. With the short edge of the pastry facing you, tightly re-roll the pastry into a log shape (repeat if you are using multiple

packets of pastry). Trim the edges of the logs so they are neat, then slice them into even rounds to create about 30-40 pastry discs in total.

STEP 5 Place one pastry disc into each well of the muffin or cupcake tin. Use your fingers to press and shape the dough so it completely covers the bottom and sides of the well. The pastry should stick up a little from the top of the well, because the pastry will shrink as it bakes. Put the cases in the fridge to chill for 15 mins.

STEP 6 Pour the custard into the pastry cups, to about 3/4 full. Bake on the top shelf of the oven for 10-15 mins. Check how brown they are and bake for a further 5-10 mins if desired. The custard should have some dark-brown spots on its surface.

STEP 7 Allow to cool slightly before dusting with icing sugar and cinnamon (if using). Serve warm. The cooled pastéis can also be frozen for when you need them – simply defrost and reheat in the oven for a few mins until completely warmed through.

MAKES 30-40 TARTS

PREP TIME 25-30 MINS

CHILL TIME OVERNIGHT, PLUS 15 MINS

COOK TIME 35-45 MINS

TIP

We have used ready-made puff pastry in this recipe, but you can always make your own if you have time.





TIRAMISU

THIS CREAMY, COFFEE-FLAVORED DESSERT IS THE PERFECT TREAT AT THE END OF AN ITALIAN FEAST

880 CALORIES

INGREDIENTS

6.8FLOZ | SCANT 2 CUPS ESPRESSO COFFEE, COOLED

5FLOZ | SCANT 2/3 CUP MARSALA WINE, OR COFFEE LIQUEUR

6 EGGS, YOLKS AND WHITES SEPARATED

1TSP VANILLA EXTRACT

8.8OZ ICING SUGAR, SIFTED

8.5FLOZ | 1 CUP DOUBLE CREAM

8.8OZ FULL-FAT MASCARPONE CHEESE

30-36 SAVOIRDI BISCUITS (LADYFINGERS OR SPONGE FINGERS), GIVE OR TAKE A FEW DEPENDING ON THE SIZE OF THE DISH

3-5Tbsp GRATED DARK (BITTERSWEET) CHOCOLATE, OR COCOA POWDER, TO DUST

8 SMALL SPRIGS FRESH MINT, TO GARNISH

1-2Tbsp WHOLE, ROASTED COFFEE BEANS, TO GARNISH

STEP 1 In a shallow bowl, combine the cooled coffee and liqueur/Marsala wine, and set aside.

STEP 2 Whisk together the egg yolks, vanilla extract and icing sugar until the mixture is a pale-yellow color.

STEP 3 Whisk the double cream until it stiffens and becomes spreadable. Then add the mascarpone and combine.

STEP 4 Add the sugary egg yolks into the mascarpone mix, and whisk again until thick and thoroughly combined.

STEP 5 In another bowl, and using a clean whisk, whip the egg whites to stiff peaks. Gently fold the egg whites into the large bowl with the mascarpone mix.

STEP 6 Take the Savoiardi biscuits and - one at a time - dip them into the coffee mixture for a few seconds on each side, then place them in the bottom of a square dish. Do this until you've arranged 10-12 Savoiardi biscuits evenly in the tray.

STEP 7 Spread around one third of the mascarpone mix on top of the soaked biscuits, smoothing it over evenly.

STEP 8 Repeat step 6, placing the biscuits on top of the layer of mascarpone.

STEP 9 Repeat step 7, then repeat step 6 once again.

STEP 10 Spread the remaining mascarpone evenly over the third layer of soaked Savoiardi biscuits. Put it in the fridge to set for at least 4 hrs, or overnight.

STEP 11 Dust liberally with grated dark chocolate, and decorate with a few sprigs of fresh mint and coffee beans before serving.

TIP

To make this halal or alcohol-free, replace the Marsala wine/coffee liqueur with more cooled espresso.

KREMSNITA

A FINGER-LICKING CREAMY DESSERT FROM SLOVENIA

880 CALORIES

TIP

Enjoy as a treat with an afternoon cup of tea or at the end of a meal as a sweet pudding option.

INGREDIENTS

17.6oz PUFF PASTRY
2.3TBSP ICING SUGAR, FOR DUSTING

FOR THE CUSTARD:

10 EGGS
14oz CASTER SUGAR
3.4 PINTS | 6²/₃ CUPS MILK
6.3oz PLAIN FLOUR
2TBSP VANILLA SUGAR
1TSP RUM

FOR THE VANILLA CREAM:

17FLOZ | 2 CUPS DOUBLE CREAM
2TBSP ICING SUGAR
1TSP VANILLA ESSENCE

STEP 1 Roll the pastry out to the size of a large baking tray. Place it onto a prepared tray, lined with baking parchment. Now prick the pastry all over with a fork and cut down the middle to create two rectangles.

STEP 2 Bake the pastry in a preheated oven for 10-15 mins at 200°C (180°C fan) | 400°F | gas 6 or until golden in color. Remove from the oven and leave it to cool while you prepare the rest.

STEP 3 Separate the egg whites and yolks, then whisk the whites with 3.5oz of caster sugar until stiff peaks form. Set aside.

STEP 4 Now whisk the egg yolks with 10.5oz of caster sugar until they begin to lighten in color. Gently add 6floz | ³/₄ cup of the cold milk, then sift in the flour.

STEP 5 Boil the rest of the milk with the vanilla sugar, then slowly add the egg yolks, stirring as you do. Whisk over the heat for around 10 mins – the mix will thicken.

STEP 6 Slowly add the custard to the egg whites, carefully folding so as not to lose too much air. Gently stir in the rum.

STEP 7 While the mix is still warm, spread it over one of the rectangles of pastry and leave it to cool.

STEP 8 Whisk the double cream with the icing sugar and vanilla essence until it thickens. Stop when it just begins to hold its shape. Spread the cream over the top of the cooled custard followed by the other sheet of pastry and dust generously with icing sugar.

STEP 9 Chill in the fridge until firm, then slice into 9 portions.

ALSO KNOWN AS THE BLEĐ CREAM CAKE, THIS DELICIOUSLY TASTY DESSERT HAS CERTAINLY ADDED TO THE POPULARITY OF THE STUNNING SLOVENIAN RESORT OF BLEĐ AND LAKE BLEĐ.

SERVINGS 9

PREP TIME 1 HR

COOK TIME 15 MINS



PISTACHIO BAKLAVA

THESE BITE-SIZED SYRUPY FILO-PASTRY MORSELS ARE A RICH AND DECADENT
END TO ANY MEAL OR A SWEET ACCOMPANIMENT TO AFTERNOON TEA

513 CALORIES PER PIECE

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE SYRUP:

16oz GRANULATED SUGAR
14.4FLOZ | 1¾ CUPS WATER
4TBSP HONEY
2 CARDAMOM PODS
1TBSP FRESH LEMON JUICE
1TSP ORANGE BLOSSOM WATER

FOR THE BAKLAVA:

17.6oz PISTACHIO NUTS, COARSELY GROUND
2oz GRANULATED SUGAR
2TSP GROUND CARDAMOM
½TSP GROUND CINNAMON
40 SHEETS FILO PASTRY
OLIVE OIL, FOR GREASING AND BRUSHING

STEP 1 First, prepare the syrup. In a saucepan, combine all of the ingredients. Place on a high heat, stirring frequently, and bring to the boil. Reduce to a medium heat and simmer for 20 mins.

STEP 2 To check if the syrup is ready, place a drop on a flat plate. If the drop holds its shape as the plate is tilted, then it's ready. Remove from the heat and add the orange blossom water. Mix well, then let it cool completely (about 4 hrs). Remove the cardamom pods.

STEP 3 Now prepare the baklava. Coarsely grind the pistachio nuts and set 1tbsp aside for decoration at the end. Mix the rest of the nuts in a bowl with the sugar, cardamom and cinnamon. Set aside.

STEP 4 Trim the pastry sheets to fit a baking tray (13x9") and place the sheets underneath a damp towel until ready to use. Preheat the oven to 175°C (155°C fan) | 350°F | gas 4. Grease a baking tray with some olive oil.

STEP 5 Line the pan with the first pastry sheet, then brush gently with olive oil. Repeat, layering and brushing until you

have 12 layers. Spread one-third of the filling over the top sheet. Then layer and brush 8 more sheets with olive oil.

STEP 6 Spread another one-third of the filling over the top sheet. Then layer and brush 8 more sheets with olive oil. Spread the final third of the filling over the top sheet. Then layer and brush 12 more sheets with olive oil.

STEP 7 Gently press the layers down and tuck in the pastry around the edges of the pan. Brush the surface with olive oil. With a sharp knife, cut into small triangles, being careful to cut all the way down to the bottom of the pan.

STEP 8 Spray the surface lightly with water, then bake in the preheated oven for 30 mins. Reduce the oven temperature to 150°C (130°C fan) | 300°F | gas 2 and continue to bake the baklava for another 30 mins, or until golden brown.

STEP 9 Remove from the oven and pour the cooled syrup over the surface. Let sit for at least 3 hrs. Scatter with leftover ground pistachios to serve.

**WITH RECIPES PASSED
DOWN FOR GENERATIONS,
BAKLAVA (OR BAKLAWA)
VARIES FROM COUNTRY
TO COUNTRY, AND EVEN
HOUSEHOLD TO HOUSEHOLD.**

MAKES 25 PIECES

PREP TIME 40 MINS

REST TIME 7 HRS

COOK TIME 1 HR

TIP

Nut-filled baklava freezes well. Just remove from the freezer and let it thaw for 1 hr before serving.



THE *Mediterranean* DIET BOOK

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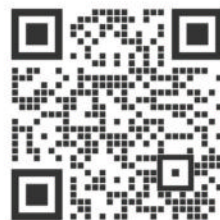


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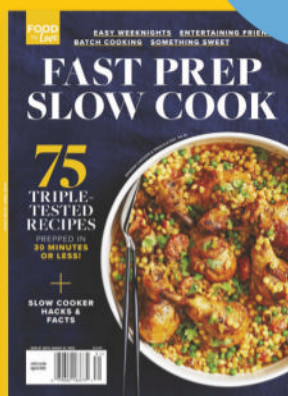
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